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FESTUS.

A POEM.

BY

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BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

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DEDICATION.

MY FATHER! unto thee to whom I owe
All that I am, all that I have and can;
Who madest me in thyself the sum of man
In all its generous aims and powers to know,
These first-fruits bring I; nor do thou forego
Marking when I the boyish feat began,
Which numbers now near three years from its plan,
Not twenty summers had embrowned my brow.
Life is at blood-heat every page doth prove.
Bear with it. Nature means Necessity.
If here be aught which thou canst love, it springs
Out of the hope that I may earn that love,
More unto me than immortality;
Or to have strung my harp with golden strings.

1839.

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FESTUS.

SCENE—*Heaven.*

God. Eternity hath snowed its years upon them ;
And the white winter of their age is come,
The world and all its worlds ; and all shall end.

Seraphim. God ! God ! God !

As flames in skies
We burn and rise
And lose ourselves in Thee.
Years on years !
And nought appears
Save God to be.
God ! God ! God !
To us no thought
Hath Being brought
Towards Thee that doth not move ;
Years on years !
And what appears
Save God to love ?
God ! God ! God !
All Thou dost make
Lies like a lake
Below Thine infinite eye :
Years on years !
And all appears
Save God to die.

Cherubim. As sun and star,
How high or far
Shew but a boundless sky ;

So creature mind
 Is all confined
 To shew Thee, God, most High !
 The sun still burns,
 The sun still turns
 Round, round himself and round ;
 So creature mind
 To self's confined,
 But Thou God hast no bound.
 Systems arise,
 Or a world dies,
 Each constant hour in air ;
 But creature mind,
 In Heaven confined,
 Lives on like Thee, God ! there.

Seraphim and Cherubim. God ! God ! God !

Thou fill'st our eyes
 As were the skies
 One burning, boundless sun ;
 While creature mind,
 In path confined,
 Passeth a spot thereon.
 God ! God ! God !

Lucifer. Ye thrones of Heaven, how bright, how pure
 How have ye brightened since I saw ye first ! [ye are !
 How have I darkened since ye saw me last !
 What is the dark abyss of fire, and what
 The ravenous heights of air, o'er which I reign,
 In agony of glory, to these seats ?
 The loathsome cavern of the oracle,
 O'er which ye rise in templed majesty,
 Filled with the incense of all worshippers,
 And echoing with the eloquence of God,
 Which rolls in sunny clouds around the Heavens.
 Yet must I work through world and life my fate ;
 And winding through the wards of human hearts,
 Steal their incarnate strength. Death does his work
 In secret and in joy intense, untold :
 As though an earthquake smacked its mumbling lips
 O'er some thick-peopled city. But for me
 Exists not peace nor pleasure, even here,
 Where all beside, the very faintest thought,

Is rapture. I will speak to God as erst.
 Father of spirit, as the sun of air !
 Beginning of all ends, and end of all
 Beginnings, throughout whole Eternity ;
 From whom Eternity and every power
 Perfect, and pure cause, is and emanates ;
 Originator without origin !
 End without end ! Creator of all ages,
 And sabbath of all Being ; who hast made
 All numbers sacred, who art all and one !
 At whose right hand the wisdom of all worlds
 Combined, is only fearful foolishness
 Or inarticulate madness ;—and Thou, Lord !
 Maker and Perfecter of all, the one !
 Being above all Being, God the Life !
 Who art the way whereon the world proceeds
 From God, all-making, and whereby returns
 The ever generated universe !
 Who rulest all worlds in the law of light,
 Thy nature and their own ; who art before
 All ages, angels, blessed, times and worlds ;
 Word that in every world art safe to save
 All souls, impregn'd with spirit, God-begot ;—
 And thou, eternal spirit-Deity ;
 Sole sanctifier of the universe ;
 Being, and Life, and Spirit, who dost make,
 Destroyest, recreatest, makest God !
 God one and Trine ! thou seest me here again !
 Still, sunlike, though eclipsed, of blinding power,
 And fiery cause, and everness of ill ;
 Behold I bow before Thee ; hear Thou me !

God. What wouldst thou, Lucifer ?

Lucifer. The world-apple
 Shews dead ripe. It wants plucking. Touch it, Thou,
 Or I, and lo ! the poor perfection falls.

God. What may to thee seem perfect, here in Heaven
 Far other sheweth.

Lucifer. Man, through ignorance, first,
 And need of knowing, fell. Now, grown so wise,
 He thinks he lacketh nothing ; no, not God.
 Is faith here ? I have missed her from the earth
 This many an age.

God. Faith is both here and there ;
Thy knowledge is imperfect. Still on earth
Are those who knowing most the most believe. [doubt.

Lucifer. More like myself who, knowing much, all

God. Perfected from the first by grace Divine,
The Heaven-born spirit and pre-immortal, fraught
With luminous fulness, though a moment dimmed
By sin, not tarnished, knowledge conciliates
With wisdom : both with faith. Were I, once more,
Future as passed, to test, by proof of one,
Still wouldst thou fail as heretofore.

Lucifer. How fail ?
I deemed me passably successful there,
In Eden, once ; and everywhere, since then,
Where'er man's heart hath planned his Paradise.

God. To finite mind, divergent from the light
Eterne, it doubtless seems so. But in sight
Of spirits, who stand concentric with the truth,
Although of bounded gaze ; like these thy peers,
Who loved thee once, loved, monished, mourned in vain,
Thy failure shews foreordered and complete.

Lucifer. God I oppose ; must. Can opposal, if
Foreordered, fail ? Then He appoints His own
Failure in mine. Such failure seems success.
Nought see I more. Can any further see ?
Let me accept the test. Or blessed, or cursed,
All seems indifferent now—with thirst of power,
Love, lore divine and human of all time,
Been, being, or to be, nought made can quench
Save waters of celestial life which hence
Aye, sunwards, flow, a youth there is, among
The sons of men, I fain would have given up
Wholly to me.

God. I know him. He is thine,
To tempt.

Lucifer. I thank Thee, Lord !

God. Upon his soul
Thou hast no power. All souls are mine for aye.
And I do give thee leave to this that he
May know my love is more than all his sin ;
And prove unto himself that nought but God
Can satisfy the soul He maketh great.

Lucifer. Thou God art all in one! Thy infinite
Bounds being. Thou hast said the world shall end.
The world is perfect, as concerns itself,
And all its parts and ends; not as towards Thee.
So man is likest and unlikest God,
Of all existence; therefore doth as much
Resemble Thee as any act a mind.

In him of whom I ask, I seek once more
To tempt the living world, and then depart. [Heaven

The Holy Ghost. And I will hallow him to the ends of
That though he plunge his soul in sin like a sword
In water, it shall nowise cling to him.
He is of Heaven. All things are known in Heaven
Ere aimed at upon earth. The child is chosen.

Saints. Another soul
The Holy One
Hath chosen out of earth;
And there is none
Throughout the whole
Like worthy of his birth.

Guardian Angel. Oh! who hath joy like mine? was I
not here

When from Thy boundless bosom, as a star
Out of the air, that soul was kindled, Lord;
And to me given to guard and guide—while both,
'Mid starry strains out of the depths of Heaven,
Fell at Thy feet in worship?—joy of joys!
To you, ye saints and angels, let me speak;
For ye I see rejoice with me. Ye know
What 'tis to triumph o'er temptation, what
To fall before it; how the young spirit faints—
The virgin tremor, the heart's ebb and flow,
When first some vast temptation calmly comes
And states itself before it, like the sun
Low looming in the west, above the wave
Of whimpling streamlet, ere its waters grow
To size aortal. Than the Fiend himself
There is no greater evil. Less the shame
Of yielding, more the glory of conquering,
In him, to whom he goes, this soul elect.
From infancy through childhood, up to youth,
Have I this soul attended; marked him blessed

With all the sweet and sacred ties of life ;
 The prayerful love of parents, pride of friends ;
 Prosperity, and health and ease ; the aids
 Of learning, social converse with the good
 And gifted ; and his heart all-lit with love,
 Like to the rolling sea with living light ;
 Hopeful and generous and earnest ; rich
 In commune with high spirits, loving truth
 And wisdom for their own divinest selves :
 Tracking the deeds of the world's glory, or
 Conning the words of wisdom, Heaven-inspired,
 As on the soul, in pure effectual ray,
 The bright, transparent atoms, thought by thought
 Fall fixed for evermore. And thus his days,
 Through sunny noon, or moonéd eve, or night
 Star-armed, shining through the deathless air,
 All radiantly elapsed, in good or joy.
 And his heart opened to the Lord of life
 As flowers do to the sun ; with prayer and praise
 Constant, for good besought and granted bliss.
 All this for long I marked. There grew, at length,
 A change within his spirit, and I feared
 A fatal and a final fall from good.
 God's love seemed lost upon him. He became
 Heart-deadened. Watching, warning, vain, I fled
 Hither to intercede with God our Lord,
 To bless him with salvation. We may plead
 Always for those we love, by leave divine.
 Nor knew I till this moment, with all Heaven,
 That, in the righteous providence of God,
 That soul was saved. Thou knowest, Lord ! the mould
 Of mortals, and the infinite end whereto
 The souls Thou savest are predestinate ;
 Oh ! be Thy mercy mighty to this soul,
 Fiend threatened ; nor permit him who presides
 O'er hell's eternal holocaust, too far
 To tempt or tamper with the heart of man !
God. My mercy doth outstretch the universe ;
 Shall it not be sufficient for one soul ?
Lucifer. I am the wrath of God unto myself,
 And by Him made to do my part. Do thou
 Thine. They are far enough apart I ween.

Guardian Angel. The heaven-strung chords of man's
immortal soul

Are not for thee to wither at thy will.
Bear witness, all ye blessed, to the word ;
Angels, intelligences, sons of God !
Ye who know nought but truth, feel nought but love,
Will nought but bliss, do nought but righteousness ;
Whose life was ere the Heavens were conceived,
The stars begotten, or the ages born ;
Ye many ordered hierarchies, which are
The love, truth, justice, majesty and might,
Dominion, glory, wisdom, bliss of God ;
Ye through whose ministry of mercy—His
Immediate, ever instant, active, all
Spirits and worlds are governed—age by age
Gazing and gaining glory ; ye who stand,
Stirless, before the throne, entranced in joy :
Or ye, whose life is to present all souls
Reborn to their Creator ; or to search
The golden globéd skies for deeds of grace ;
And ye who move all Heavens, in whose names
The name of God is, as in angels' all :
The crown, the wisdom, the intelligence,
Kindness, and strength and beauty, splendour, worth,
Original and rule ; and ye who move
Restless around the throne, the burning seven,
The virtue, power, salvation, fire and rest,
Blessing and praise of God ; and ye who rule
Regions or kingdoms, states, tribes, families ;
Ages, and times, and seasons, and events ;
Systems and elements, material powers ;
Mental and spiritual ; or ye who bear
Souls from the Heaven to earth, from earth to Heaven ;
Ye tenants of the archetypal worlds
And spiritual spheres ; and you, ye saints !
Freed once on earth into the liberty
Of the necessity which is of God ;
Yours are the many multitudes of stars,
And bliss and power for ever ; ye are gods ;
And live an endless life, bespoken here ;
Bear witness, all, that happiness succeeds
To godliness ; and that, despite of sin,

The world may recognize in all time's scenes,
 Though belts of clouds bar half its burning disk,
 The overruling, overthrowing power,
 Which by our creature purposes works out
 Its deeds, and by our deeds its purposes.

Lucifer. God! for Thy glory only can I act,
 And for Thy creatures' good. When creatures stray
 Farthest from Thee, then warmest towards them burns
 Thy love; even as yon sun beams hotliest on
 The earth when distant most.

God. The earth whereon
 He dwells, this grain selected from the sands
 Of life, dies with him.

Lucifer. God! I go to do
 Thy will. Then he whom I have lit on seems
 Of the elect. But will their fate involve
 All man's? And if all man's, creation's, too?
 Heaven's oracles are speechless here in Heaven.
 Still doubt I.

God. Thou, too, who watchest o'er the world
 Whose end I fix, prepare to have it judged.

Angel of Earth. Let me not then have watched o'er it
 in vain.

From age to age, from hour to hour, I still
 Have hoped it would grow better—hope so now;
 'Tis better than it once was, and hath more
 Of mind and freedom than it ever had.
 I love it more than ever. Thou didst give
 It to me as a child. To me earth is
 Even as the boundless universe to Thee;
 Nay, more! for Thou couldst make another. It is
 My world. Take it not from me, Lord! Thou, Christ!
 Mad'st it the altar where Thou offeredst up
 Thyself for the creation. Let it be
 Immortal as Thy love. And altars are
 Holy; and sister angels, sister orbs
 Hail it afar as such. Oh! I have heard
 World question world and answer; seen them weep
 Each other if eclipsed for one red hour;
 And of all worlds most generous was mine;
 The tenderest and the fairest.

Lucifer.

Knowest thou not

God's Son to be the brother and the friend
Of spirit everywhere? Or hath thy soul
Been bound for ever to thy foolish world?

Angel. Star unto star speaks light; and world to world
Repeats the password of the universe
To God; the name of Christ—the one great word
Well worth all languages in earth or Heaven.

Son of God. Think not I lived and died for thine alone,
And that no other sphere hath hailed me Christ.
My life is ever suffering for love.
In judging and redeeming worlds is spent
Mine everlasting being.

Lucifer. Earth He next
Will judge; for so saith God.

Angel of Earth. Be it not, Lord!
Thou art a God of goodness and of love;
He is the evil of the universe;
And loveth not the earth, Thy Son, nor Thee.
Thou knowest best.

Lucifer. Behold now all yon worlds!
The space each fills shall be its successor.
Accept the consolation.

Angel of Earth. Earth! oh, Earth!

Lucifer. 'Tis earth shall lead destruction; she shall end.
The stars shall wonder why she comes no more
On her accustomed orbit; and the sun
Miss one of his apostle lights; the moon,
An orphan orb, shall seek for earth for aye,
Through time's untrodden depths, and find her not;
No more shall morn, out of the holy east,
Stream o'er the amber air her level light;
Nor evening, with the spectral fingers, draw
Her star-sprent curtain round the head of earth;
Her footsteps never thence again shall grace
The blue sublime of Heaven. Her grave is dug.
I see the stars, night-clad, all gathering
In long and sad procession. Death's at work.
And, one by one, shall all yon wandering worlds,
Whether in orbéd path they roll, or trail,
In an inestimable length of light,
Their golden train of tresses after them,
Cease; and the sun, centre and sire of light,

The key-stone of the world-built arch of Heaven,
 Be left in burning solitude. The stars,
 Which stand as thick as dewdrops on the fields
 Of Heaven, and all they comprehend, shall pass.
 The spirits of all worlds shall all depart
 To their great destinies ; and thou and I,
 Greater in grief than worlds, shall live as now.
 In hell's dark annals there is something writ,
 Which shall amaze man yet.) There—to thy earth !

Angel of Earth. There is a blind world, yet unlit by God,
 Rolling around the extremest edge of light ;
 Where all things are disaster and decay,
 The outcast of all being ; no one thing
 Fitting another : that is fit for thee.
 Be that thy world, but not the living earth.
 Stretch forth Thy shining shield, O God ! the Heavens,
 Over the prostrate earth, an armed friend,
 And save her from the swift and violent hell
 Her beauty hath enchanted ! from the wrath
 Of love like his, oh save her, though by death

God. Destruction and salvation are the hands
 Upon the face of time. When both unite,
 The day of death dawns. Every orb exists
 Unto its preappointed end : and earth,
 My creature, the elect of worlds, ere all
 Is saved. The world shall perish as a worm
 Upon destruction's path ; the universe
 Evanish like a ghost before the sun ;
 Yea like a doubt before the truth of God ;
 Yet nothing more than death shall perish. Then,
 Rejoice ye souls of God regenerate,
 Ye indwellers divine of Deity ;
 In Him ye are immortal as Himself.

Son of God. O'er all things are eternity and change,
 And special predilection of our God.
 Thou who createst souls, as the sun clouds,
 Out of the sea of spirit, sire of both
 The first and second natures of Thy Son ;
 In whom the maker and the made make one
 Deific spirit ; who in every world
 Payeth creation's penalties ; in all
 Is heir of God and nature, and in Thee

And in self-worship, Deifies himself.
 And you blest spirits, for whom I died, for whom
 Fore-fated, fore-atoned for from the first,
 All Heaven reserves the fulness of its bliss;
 Creator and created! witness both,
 How I have loved ye, as God-natured life
 Alone can love and suffer. Let the earth,
 And every orb, the offspring of all air,
 Perish; but all I die for, live for me.

God. The earth shall not be when her sabbath ends,
 In the high close of order.

Lucifer. Heaven, farewell!
 Hell is more bearable than nothingness.

Thrones. Thou, God, art Lord of mercy; and Thy
 thoughts
 Are high above the star-dust of the world!
 The spheres themselves are but as shining noughts,
 On these imperial robes, Thy skies, impearled.
 From rank to rank in Thearchy divine,
 We angel raylets gladden in Thy sight;
 Whose thousand thrones are holy in the Heavens,
 And hidden in Thy universal light.

Dominations. Between Creation and Destruction now
 The lull of creatural action intervenes.
 God rests; and the world is working out its week;
 His hand is in His bosom, and at rest.
 But what was gradually made shall be
 Most suddenly unmade. That arm which now
 Slumbers upon His breast shall yet wave forth;
 And from the lightning pathway of His feet,
 Like to the gossamer woof, beaded with dew,
 Which stretcheth o'er the morning traveller's walk,
 The ætherial web, world-studded, of the skies,
 Shall pass into perdition; for, behold!
 His oath is on the altar of the heavens,
 And never can be cancelled. All shall end.
 The system of material worlds shall cease;
 Replaced by spheres of spiritual light.
 Matter is not the ultimate, but is born
 Of the Eternal and the virgin void.
 And Thee, O Lord, who holdest in thine hand
 The infinite, as a ball, the worlds obey;

Yet o'er the universe, omnipotent,
As o'er the meanest atom, reignest Thou.

Powers. Thy might is self-creative, and Thy works
Immortal, temporal, destructible,
Are ever in Thy sight and blessed there.
The Heavens are Thy bosom, and Thine eye
Is high o'er all existence ; yea the worlds
Are but Thy shining foot-prints upon space.

Princedom. Eternal Lord ! Thy strength compels the
worlds,
And bows the heads of ages ; at Thy voice
Their unsubstantial essence wears away.

Virtues. All-favouring God ! we glory but in Thee.
Ye heavens exalt, expand yourselves ; they come
The infinite generations, all Divine,
Of Deity, our brethren and our friends.

Archangels. Thou who hast thousand names, as night
hath stars,
Which light Thee up to eye create, yet not
One thousandth part illumine Thy boundlessness
Nor that abyss of Being midst of which
Thy countless wonders constellate themselves ;
Thy light, the light we dwell in, shall at last
Fulfil the universe, and all be bliss ;
The consummation of all ages come.
We praise Thee for Thy mercies, and for this,
The first, and last, and greatest of all boons.

Angels. Thee, God ! we praise
Through our ne'er sunseting days,
And Thy just ways,

Divine :

In Thy hand is every spirit,
And the meed the same may merit
All which all the worlds inherit
Are Thine.

It is not unto creatures given
To scale the purposes of Heaven,
Always just and kind ;
But before Thy mighty breath,
Life and spirit, dust and death,
The boundless All is driven,
Like clouds by wind.

Angel of Earth. Woe! woe at last in Heaven;
 Earth to death is given;
 The ends of things hang still
 Over them as a sky;
 Do what we will,
 All's for eternity!

SCENE—*Wood and Water—Sunset.*

FESTUS alone.

Festus. This is to be a mortal and immortal!
 To live within a circle,—and to be
 That dark point where the shades of all things around
 Meet, mix, and deepen. All things unto me
 Shew their dark sides. Somewhere there must be light.
 Oh! I feel like a seed in the cold earth;
 Quickening at heart, and pining for the air.
 Passion is destiny. The heart is its own
 Fate. It is well youth's gold rubs off so soon.
 The heart gets dizzy with its drunken dance,
 And the voluptuous vanities of life
 Enchain, enchant, and cheat my soul no more.
 My spirit is on edge. I can enjoy
 Nought which has not the honied sting of sin;
 That soothing fret which makes the young untried,
 Longing to be beforehand with their nature,
 In dreams and lonesome cry, they die to live;
 That wanton whetting of the soul, which while
 It gives a finer, keener edge for pleasure,
 Wastes more and dulls the sooner. Rouse thee, heart;
 Bow of my life, thou yet art full of spring!
 My quiver still hath many purposes.
 Yet what is worth a thought of all things here?
 How mean, how miserable every care;
 How doubtful, too, the system of the mind!
 And then the ceaseless, changeless, hopeless round
 Of weariness, and heartlessness, and woe,
 And vice and vanity! Yet these make life;
 The life at least I witness, if not feel.
 No matter—we are immortal. How I wish
 I could love men! for amid all life's quests

There seems but worthy one—to do men good.
 It matters not how long we live, but how.
 For as the parts of one manhood while here
 We live in every age : we think, and feel,
 And feed upon the coming and the gone
 As much as on the now time. Man is one :
 And he hath one great heart. It is thus we feel,
 With a gigantic throb athwart the sea,
 Each other's rights and wrongs ; thus are we men.
 Let us think less of men and more of God.
 Sometimes the thought comes swiftening over us,
 Like a small bird winging the still blue air ;
 And then again, at other times, it rises /
 Slow, like a cloud which scales the skies all breathless,
 And just overhead lets itself down on us.
 Sometimes we feel the wish across the mind
 Rush like a rocket tearing up the sky,
 That we should join with God and give the world
 The slip : but while we wish, the world turns round,
 And peeps us in the face—the wanton world ;
 We feel it gently pressing down our arm—
 The arm we had raised to do for truth such wonders ;
 We feel it softly bearing on our side—
 We feel it touch and thrill us through the body,—
 And we are fools, and there's an end of us. /
 'Tis a fine thought that sometime end we must.
 There sets the sun of suns ! dies in all fire,
 Like Asshur's death-great monarch. God of might !
 We love and live on power. It is spirit's end.
 Mind must subdue. To conquer is its life.
 Why madest Thou not one spirit, like the sun,
 To king the world ? And oh ! might I have been
 That sun-mind, how I would have warmed the world
 To love and worship and bright life !

Lucifer, suddenly appearing. Not thou !

Hadst thou more power the more would'st thou misuse.

Festus. Who art thou, pray ? I saw thee not before.
 It seems as thou hadst grown out of the air.

Lucifer. Thou knowest me well. Though stranger to
 thine eye
 I am not to thine heart.

Festus.

I know thee not.

Lucifer. Come nearer. Look on me. I am above thee ;
Beneath thee, and around thee, and before thee.

Festus. Why, art thou all things, or dost go through all ?
A spirit, or embodied blast of air ?

I feel thou art a spirit.

Lucifer. Yea, I am.

Festus. I knew it. I am glad, yet tremble so.
What hours upon hours have I longed for this,
And hoped that thought or prayer might produce.
I have besought the stars, with tears, to send
A power unto me ; and have set the clouds,
Until I thought I saw one coming : but
The shadowy giant alway thinned away ;
And I was fated unimmortalized.

What shall I do ? Oh ! let me kneel to thee.

Lucifer. Nay, rise ! and I'll not say, for thine own sake,
That thou dost pray in private to the Devil.

Festus. Father of lies, thou liest.

Lucifer. I am he !

It is enough to make the Devil merry,
To think that men call on me momentarily,
Deeming me ever dungeoned fast in hell ;
Swearers and swaggerers jeer at my name ;
And oft indeed it is a special jest
With witling gallants. Let me once appear !
Woe's me ! they faint and shudder—pale and pray ;
The burning oath which quivered on the lip,
Starts back, and sears and blisters up the tongue ;
Confusion ransacks the abandoned heart ;
Quells the bold blood ; and o'er the vaulted brow
Slips the white woman-hand. To judgment, ho !
The very pivot of the earth seems snapped ;
And down they drop like ruins, to repent.
Such be the bravery of mighty man !

Festus. I must be mad ; or mine eye cheats my brain ;
And this strange phantom comes from overthought,
Like the white lightning from a day too hot.
It must be so. But I will pass it.

Lucifer. Stay !

Festus. O save me, God ! He is reality !

Lucifer. And now thou kneel'st to Heaven. Fye, grace-
less boy !

Mocking thy Maker with a cast-off prayer ;
For had not I the first fruits of thy faith ?

Festus. Tempter, away ! From all the crowds of life
Why single me ? Why score the young green hole
For fellage ? Go ! Am I the youngest, worst ?
No. Light the fires of hell with other souls ;
Mine shall not burn with thee.

Lucifer. Thou judgest harshly.
Can I not touch thee without slaying thee ?

Festus. Why art thou here ? What wouldst thou have
with me ?

Lucifer. 'Fore all I would have gentle words and looks.

Festus. I pray thee, go.

Lucifer. I cannot quit thee yet.
But why so sad ? Wilt kneel to me again ?
This leafy closet is most apt for prayer.

Festus. Yes ; I will pray for thee, and for myself.

Lucifer. Waste not thy prayers ; I scatter them : they
reach

No further than thy breath—a yard or so.
And as for me, I heed them, need them not.
My nature God knows and hath fixed ; and He
Recks little of the manners of the world ;
Wicked He holdeth it and unrepentant.

Festus. Therefore the more some ought to pray.

Lucifer. To blow
A kiss, a bubble and a prayer, hath like
Effect and satisfaction.

Festus. Let me hence !
Go tell thy blasphemies and lies elsewhere.
Thou scatter prayer ! Make me Thy minister
One moment, God ! that I may rid the world
For ever of its evil. Oh, Thine arm !

Lucifer. Canst rid thyself ?

Festus. Alas, no. Get thee gone !
Can naught insult thee nor provoke thy flight ?

Lucifer. I laugh alike at ruin and redemption.
I am the one which knows nor hope nor fear ;
Which ne'er knew good nor e'er can know the worst.
What thinkest thou can anger me, or harm ?

Festus. Wherefore didst thou quit hell ? To drag me
there ?

Lucifer. Thou wilt not guess mine errand. Deem'st thou aught

Which God hath made all evil? Me He made.

Oft I do good; and thee to serve I come.

Festus. Did I not hear thee boast with thy last breath,
Not to have known what good was?

Lucifer From myself
I know it not; yet God's will I must work.
I come, I say, to serve thee.

Festus. Well I would
Thou never hadst; but speak thy purpose straight.

Lucifer. I heard thy prayer at sunset. I was here.
I saw thy secret longings, unsaid thoughts,
Which prey upon the breast like night-fires on
A heath. I know thy heart by heart. I read
The tongue when still as well as when it moves.
And thou didst pray to God. Did He attend?
Or turn His eye from the great glass of things,
Wherein He worshippeth eternally
Himself, to thee one moment? He did not.
I tell thee nought He cares for men. I came
And come to proffer thee the earth; to set
Thee on a throne—the throne of will unbound—
To crown thy life with liberty and joy;
And make thee free and mighty even as I am.

Festus. I would not be as thou art for hell's throne;
Add earth's—add Heaven's.

Lucifer. I knew thy proud high heart.
To test its worth and mark I held it brave,
In shape and being thus myself I came;
Not in disguise of opportunity—
Not as some silly toy, which serves for most—
Not in the mask of lucre, lust nor power—
Not in a goblin size nor cherub form—
But as the soul of hell and evil came I
With leave to give the kingdom of the world—
The freedom of thyself.

Festus. Good; prove thy powers.

Lucifer. Do I not prove them? Who but I, that have
Immortal might o'er mine own mind, and o'er
All hearts and spirits of the living world,
Would share it with another, or forego,

One hour, the great enjoyment of the whole?
And who but I give men what each loves best?

Festus. Open the Heavens, and let me look on God.
Open my heart, and let me see myself.
Then I'll believe thee.

Lucifer. Thou shalt not believe
For that I give thee, but for that I am.
Believe me first; then I will prove myself.
Though sick I know thee of the joys of sense,
Yet those thou lovest most I will make pure,
And render worthy of thy love: unfilm them,
That so thou mayst not dally with the blind.
Thou shalt possess them to their very souls.
Pleasure, and love, and unimagined beauty;
All, all that be delicious, brilliant, great,
Of worldly things are mine, and mine to give.

Festus. What can be counted pleasure after love?
Like the young lion which hath once lapped blood,
The heart can ne'er be coaxed back to aught else.

Lucifer. I will sublime it for thee all to bliss:
As yet it hath but made thee wretched.

Festus. Spirit,
It is not bliss I seek: I care not for it.
I am above the low delights of life.
The life I live is in a dark cold cavern,
Where I wander up and down, feeling for something,
Which is to be—and must be—what I know not;
But the incarnation of my destiny
Is nigh.

Lucifer. It is thy fate which weighs upon thee.
Necessity sits on humanity,
Like to the world on Atlas' neck. 'Tis this,
And the sultry sense of overdrawn life.

Festus. True;
The worm of the world hath eaten out my heart.

Lucifer. I will renew it in thee. It shall be
The bosom favourite of every beauty,
Even like a rosebud. Thou shalt render happy,
By naming who may love thee. Come with me.

Festus. I have a love on earth, and one in Heaven.

Lucifer. Thou shalt love ten as others love but one!

Festus. Oh! I was glad when something in me said,

Come, let us worship beauty ! and I bowed ;
And went about to find a shrine ; but found
None that my soul, when seeing, said enough to.
Many I met with where I put up prayers,
And had them more than answered ; some where love
Filled the whole place as 'twere oppressed with Heaven.
And I worshipped, partly because others did ;
Partly because I could not help myself.
But none of these were for me ; and away
I went, champing and choking in proud pain ;
In a burning wrath that not a sea could slake.
So I betook me to the sounding sea ;
And overheard its slumberous mutterings
Of a revenge on man ; whereat almost
I gladdened, for I felt savage as the sea.
I had only one thing to behold—the sea ;
I had only one thing to believe—I loved ;
Until that lonesome sameness grew sublime
And darkly beautiful as death, when some
Bright soul regains its star-home ; or as Heaven,
Just when the stars falter forth, one by one,
Like the first words of love from a maiden's lips.
There are points from which we can command our life ;
When the soul sweeps the future like a glass ;
And coming things, full freighted with our fate,
Jut out, dark, on the offing of the mind.
Let them come ! Many will go down in sight ;
In the billow's joyous dash of death go down.
At last came love ; not whence I sought nor thought it ;
As on a ruined and bewildered wight
Rises the roof he meant to have lost for ever.
On came the living vessel of all love ;
Terrible in its beauty as a serpent ;
Rode down upon me like a ship full sail,
And, bearing me before it, kept me up,
Spite of the drowning speed at which we drave
On, on, until we sank both. Was not this love ?

Lucifer. Why, how can I tell ? I am not in love ;
But I have oftentimes heard mine angels call
Most piteously on their lost loves in Heaven ;
And, as I suffer, I have seen them come ;
Seen starlike faces peep between the clouds,

The lightning loathes its cloud—the soul its clay.
Can I forget that hand I took in mine,
Pale as pale violets; that eye, where mind
And matter met alike divine? ah, no!
May God that moment judge me when I do!
Oh! she was fair: her nature once all spring,
And deadly beauty like a maiden sword;
Startlingly beautiful. I see her now!
Whate'er thou art thy soul is in my mind;
Thy shadow hourly lengthens o'er my brain,
And peoples all its pictures with thyself.
Gone, not forgot—passed, not lost—thou shalt shine
In Heaven like a bright spot in the sun!
She said she wished to die, and so she died!
For, cloudlike, she poured out her love, which was
Her life, to freshen this parched heart. (It was thus:
I said we were to part, but she said nothing.
There was no discord—it was music ceased—
Life's thrilling, bounding, bursting joy. She sate
Like a house-god, her hands fixed on her knee;
And her dark hair lay loose and long around her,
Through which her wild bright eye flashed like a flint.
She spake not, moved not, but she looked the more,
As if her eye were action, speech, and feeling.)
I felt it all; and came and knelt beside her.
The electric touch solved both our souls together.
Then comes the feeling which unmakes, undoes;
Which tears the sealike soul up by the roots,
And lashes it in scorn against the skies.
Twice did I madly swear to God, hand clenched,
That not even He nor death should tear her from me.
It is the saddest and the sorest sight
One's own love weeping;—but why call on God,
But that the feeling of the boundless bounds
All feeling, as the welkin doth the world?
It is this which ones us with the whole and God.
Then first we wept; then closed and clung together;
And my heart shook this building of my breast,
Like a live engine booming up and down.)
She fell upon me like a snow-wreath thawing.
Never were bliss and beauty, love and woe,
Ravelled and twined together into madness,

As in that one wild hour; to which all else,
 The passed is but a picture—that alone
 Is real, and for ever there in front.
 A cloud came down between us, as between
 Twin stars; and when it lifted, this had set;
 That mingled with the Heaven's immortal day.
 And now I am alone. Say on! What more
 Can tempt save union of love with Death?
 But yester-eve it was she died, and now
 Scarcely hath the spirit yet aspired to Heaven.
 I feel it hovering round me. Let mine eyes
 But realize their faith, and I am thine.
 The soul first, then the body and the grave
 Are welcome or indifferent as may be.

Lucifer. With those whom Death hath drawn I meddle
 not.

My part is with the living solely here.
 I have not told thee half I will do for thee.
 All secrets thou shalt ken—all mysteries construe;
 At nothing marvel. All the veins which stretch,
 Unsearchable by human eyes, of lore
 Most precious, most profound, to thine shall bare
 And vulgar lie like dust. The world within,
 The world above thee, and the dark domain,
 Mine own thou shalt o'errule; and he alone
 Who rightly can esteem such high delights,
 He only merits—he alone shall have.

Festus. And if I have, shall I be happier?
 What is pleasure? What, happiness?

Lucifer. It is that
 I vouchsafe to thee.

Festus. Am I tempted thus
 Unto my fall?

Lucifer. God wills or lets it be.
 How thinkest thou?

Festus. That I will go with thee.

Lucifer. From God I come.

Festus. I do believe thee, spirit.
 He will not let thee harm me. Him I love,
 And thee I fear not. I obey Him.

Lucifer. Good,
 Both time and ease are urgent. Come. But sec!

Nay; night hath one more marvel than the moon.

Festus. I glimpse the dark flash of an angel's wing,
But whose I see not, nor, though seer-born, know.

Lucifer. Spells too have I, thou knowest; and my ring,
The round horizon of the visible world,
Will hold a ghost or two. But what is this?
Superfluous were all evocation here.

No interruption, sure; no afterthought?

Guardian Angel. Spirit of Ill, who round the orbéd air
Roamest, thy interference ratified
By God's will, for the time my task annuls;
And I, by word supreme my charge resign.

Lucifer. Happy relief 'twere, doubtless for thyself,
And many a myriad like thee, angel motes!
Ye are a race superior far to doves;
Whiter in plume, and in the pen-feather
More potent, notably. Thy cure be mine.

Festus. I hear a mixed sound as of light and night
In shadowy conference.

Lucifer. It concerneth thee,
And yet thou mayst not know.

Festus. Be as it may
That, canst thou say me truly?

Lucifer. Wherefore not?

Falsehood and truth to me indifferent be;
Nor more than that, this penal. Not to know
All things, so much still knowing; to what end
The universe is tending, when fulfilled
Its spatial orbitation; in what die
The metamorphic essence lastly cools;
Nor how, in finite creature, good and ill
Should infinitely differ, forms the curse
And penalty all pay. I, most, whom Fate
Aye drives contrarious on the fiery lines
I break not, and which cannot bear me down.
I grow impatient of this goalless race,
Recessions and precessions: and this change
Of elemental atoms without end;
Of self-paid dues, and plagues the world enjoys;
And renovative ruin; swarms of life
In the corrupting corse creation seems.
It is time that something should begin to end.

I have beheld the inflation of the world ;
And dogged the huge delusion ; I await
The cloudy wreck, trailed o'er the tract of time.

Festus. Where imperfection ceaseth Heaven begins.

Lucifer. But I who am immortal, and exist
Coequal with these monumental skies,
The primal and the final form of life,
Seem to myself dead ; and in woe await
Woe's foredoomed abrogation ; as the sun
Opens with key of fire the locks of ice
Slow-yielding, and from breasts of barrenness
A fruitful flood draws forth, that with new life
Redeems creation ; but large store still leaves
Of frost eternal ; so, I, crowned with doom
Impending but invisible, pace the round
Eternal of life's fixed finality.

Guardian Angel. Do thou thy best, thy worst, thou
still art foiled.
And while ingriding even thy gravest wound,
Losest thine aim ; that wound is healed of death.

Lucifer. Art thou not hence, celestial sinecure ?
Instead of lolling on his shoulders, him
Thou yet mayst see on mine.

Festus. Again I hear,
As though with golden lips some Titan cloud,
At ease immense, held word-play with the sun.

Guardian Angel. Yet not in idlesse, holy though it
were,
Nor marble meditation, nor mere thought
Of the supreme perfection,—thought alone
Worthy the name of thought in soul create ;
The river homaging its ocean fount
In every whispering wavelet—wrap I me ;
Far other aim be mine.

Lucifer. Bereaved of thee,
We may prepare to see strange sights indeed ;
Earth's polar lynch-pins loosened, and the wheels
Of light and dark that the world drags on, smashed.

Guardian Angel. I leave him, not desert : for, fortified
With the pure love of one, he God shall love
For granting him that blessing. For the rest,
In Heaven's eternal archives all is writ,

Pertaining to the mountain-thronéd end.
 I will prepare my loved one's destiny ;
 And with my kindred angels smoothen his ways
 So among men, that he o'er all may cope,
 Throneworthy through all ages ; hallowed, blessed ;
 Born of the lofty lineage of the light,
 And gifted with the sceptre of a star,
 In state pre-temporal, fated to earth's end.
 Prophets shall preach of him, and wise men win,
 By secret power, the world to choose him chief ;
 The universal faith impersonate.
 Peace to the soul-world, and the grand belief
 Wherein are blended truth and bliss, shall he,
 By aidance of the blessed install on earth
 Calmly, at once, as Heaven instates its stars.

Lucifer. Athwart this web, then, must I throw my warp.
 Can I not poison all the springs of life
 And founts of feeling ? Friendship make a void,
 And love, a golden snare, wherein his heart
 Shall rage like a caged lion ? Is it wit
 Hath power to satisfy the soul ? or power
 The wit to save the spirit from despair ?
 These are my costliest baits, and on his path
 Must these be spread. Distracted with delights
 Conceived of, let me fancy he escapes.

Guardian Angel. God's servant is man's master ; so shall
 rule,
 One with Heaven's spiritual sun, whose light
 Soul-quickening, Being with true life impregns,
 The spirit I have tended on. And now,
 Still watchful, and still wistful, I depart.
 Scion of life eterne, and ward of Heaven,
 Mine earthly charge, farewell !

Lucifer.

Again ?

What's that ?

Festus.

I saw a light, like earth-born lightning, shoot
 Up, through night's infinite sanctuary.

Lucifer.

It was nothing.

Festus. Give me a breathing-time to fortify,
 Within myself, the promise I have made.

Lucifer. Expect me, then, at midnight, here. Remember,
 That thou canst any time repent.

Festus.

Ay, true.

Lucifer. Repentance never yet did aught on earth,
It undoes many good things. Of all men,
Heaven shield me from the wretch who can repent!

SCENE.—*Water and Wood.—Midnight.*

FESTUS, alone.

All things are calm, and fair, and passive. Earth
Looks as if lulled upon an angel's lap
Into a breathless dewy sleep : so still
That we can only say of things, they be !
The lakelet now, no longer vexed with gusts,
Replaces on her breast the pictured moon,
Pearled round with stars. Sweet imaged scene of time
To come, perchance, when, this vain life o'erspent,
Earth may some purer beings' presence bear ;
Mayhap even God may walk among His saints,
In eminence and brightness like yon moon,
Mildly outbeaming all the beads of light
Strung o'er Night's proud dark brow. How strangely fair
Yon round still star, which looks half suffering from,
And half rejoicing in its own strong fire ;
Making itself a loneliness of light,
Like Deity, where'er in Heaven it dwells.
How can the beauty of material things
So win the heart and work upon the mind,
Unless like-natured with them ? Are great things
And thoughts of the same blood ? They have like effect.

Lucifer. Why doubt on mind ? What matter how we
call

That which all feel to be their noblest part ?
Even spirits have a better and a worse :
For every thing created must have form ;
Form meaning limitation. God, alone,
Is formless and illimitable mind.
Passions they have, somewhat like thine ; but less
Of grossness and that downwardness of soul
Which men have. It is true they have no earth ;
For what they live on is above themselves.

Festus. There seems a sameness among things ; for mind

And matter speak, in causes, of one God.
 The inward and the outward worlds are like ;
 The pure and gross but differ in degree.
 Tears, feeling's bright embodied form, are not
 More pure than dewdrops, Nature's tears, which she
 Sheds in her own breast for the fair which die
 The sun insists on gladness ; but at night,
 When he is gone, poor Nature loves to weep.

Lucifer. There is less real difference among things
 Than men imagine. They overlook the mass,
 But fasten each on some particular crumb,
 Because they feel that they can equal that,
 Of doctrine, or belief; or party cause.

Festus. That is the madness of the world—and that
 Would I remove.

Lucifer. It is imbecility,
 Not madness.

Festus. Oh ! the brave and good who serve
 A worthy cause can only one way fail ;
 By perishing therein. Is it to fail ?
 No ; every great or good man's death is a step
 Firm set towards their end—the end of being,
 Which is the good of all, and love of God.
 The world must have great minds, even as great spheres
 Or suns, to govern lesser restless minds,
 While they stand still and burn with life ; to keep
 Them in their places, and to light and heat them.
 If I desire immortal life for aught,
 It is to learn the mystery of mind ;
 And somewhat more of God. Let others rule
 Systems or succour saints, if such things please ;
 To live like light, or die in light like dew ;
 Either, I should be blest.

Lucifer. It may not be.
 For as we do not see the sun himself,
 It is but the light about him, like a ring
 Of glory round the forehead of a saint, so
 God thou wilt never see. His naked love
 Is terrible ; so great that saints dread more
 To be forgiven than sinners do to die.

Festus. Men have a claim on God ; and none who hath
 A heart of kindness, reverence and love,

But dare look God in the face and ask His smile.
 He dwells in no fierce light—no cloud of flame;
 And if it were, Faith's eye can look through hell,
 And through the solid world. We must all think
 On God. Yon water must reflect the sky.
 Midnight! Day hath too much of light for us,
 To see things spiritually. Mind and Night
 Will meet, though in silence, like forbidden lovers,
 With whom to see each other's sacred form
 Must satisfy. The stillness of deep bliss,
 Sound as the silence of the high hill-top,
 Where thunder finds no echo—like God's voice
 Upon the worldling's proud, cold rocky heart—
 Fills full the sky; and the eye shares with Heaven
 That look, so like to feeling, which the bright
 And glorious things of Nature ever wear.
 There is much to think and feel of things beyond
 This earth; which lie, as we deem, upwards—far
 From the day's glare and riot—they are Night's!
 Oh! could we lift the future's sable shroud!

Lucifer. Behind a shroud what should'st thou see but
 death?

Festus. Spirit is like the thread whereon are strung
 The beads or worlds of life. It may be here,
 It may be there, that I shall live again;
 In yon strange world whose long nights know no star;
 But seven fair maidlike moons attending him
 Perfect his sky—perchance in one of those—
 But live again I shall, wherever it be.
 We long to learn the future—love to guess.

Lucifer. The science of the future is to man,
 But what the shadow of the wind might be.
 Such thoughts are vain and useless.

Festus. Forced on us.

Lucifer. All things are of necessity.

Festus. Then best.

But the good are never fatalists. The bad
 Alone act by necessity, they say.

Lucifer. It matters not what men assume to be;
 Or good or bad, they are but what they are.

Festus. What is necessity? Are we, and thou,
 And all the worlds, and the whole infinite

We cannot see, but working out God's thoughts?
And have we no self-action? Are all God?

Lucifer. Then hath He sin and all absurdity.

Festus. Yet, if created Being have free-will,
Is it not wrong to judge it may traverse
God's own high will, and yet impossible
To think on't otherwise?

Lucifer. It may be so.

All creature wills, and all their ends and powers
Must come within the boundless scope of God's.

Festus. And all our powers are but weaknesses
To what we shall have, and to that God hath.
Doth not the wish, too, point the likelihood
Of life to come?

Lucifer. Boys wish that they were kings.
And so with thee. A deathless spirit's state,
Freed from gross form and bodily weightiness,
Seems kingly by the side of souls like thine.
And boys and men will likely both be balked.
What if it be, that spirit, after death,
Is loosed like flesh into its elements?
The worlds which man hath constellated, hold
No fellowship in nature; nor perchance
As he hath systemised, life, mind and soul.
But sooth to say, I know not aught of this.
I have no kind. No nature like to me
Exists; and human spirits must at least
Sleep till the day of doom—if ever it be.

Festus. Hast never known one free from body?

Lucifer. None.

Festus. Why seek then to destroy them?

Lucifer. It is my part.

Let ruin bury ruin. Let it be
Woe here, woe there, woe, woe be everywhere.
It is not for me to know, nor thee, the end
Of evil. I inflict and thou must bear.
The arrow knoweth not its end nor aim.
And I keep rushing, ruining along
Like a great river rich with dead men's souls.
For if I knew, I might rejoice; and that
To me by Nature is forbidden. I know
Nor joy nor sorrow; but a changeless tone

Of sadness like the nightwind's is the strain
 Of what I have of feeling. I am not
 As other spirits,—but a solitude
 Even to myself; I the sole spirit sole.

Festus. Can none of thine immortals answer me?

Lucifer. None, mortal!

Festus. Where then is thy vaunted power?

Lucifer. It is better seen as thus I stand apart
 From all. Mortality is mine—the green
 Unripened universe. But as the fruit
 Matures, and world by world drops mellowed off
 The wrinkling stalk of Time, as thine own race
 Hath seen of stars now vanished—all is hid
 From me. My part is done. What after comes
 I know not more than thou.

Festus.

Raise me a spirit!

Awake, ye dead! out with the secret, Death;
 The grave hath no pride, nor the rise-again.
 Let each one bring the bane whereof he died.
 Bring the man his, the maiden hers! Oh! half
 Mankind are murderers of themselves or souls.
 Yea, what is life but lingering suicide?
 Wake, dead! Ye know the truth; yet there ye lie
 All mingling, mouldering, perishing together,
 Like run sand in the hour-glass of old Time.
 Death is the mad world's asylum. There is peace:
 Destruction's quiet and equality.
 Night brings out stars as sorrow shews us truths:
 Though many, yet they help not; bright, they light not.
 They are too late to serve us: and sad things
 Are aye too true. We never see the stars
 Till we can see nought but them. So with truth.
 And yet if one would look down a deep well,
 Even at noon, we might see those same stars
 Far fairer than the blinding blue—the truth.
 Probe the profound of thine own nature, man!
 And thou mayst see reflected, e'en in life,
 The worlds, the Heavens, the ages; by and by,
 The coming come. Then welcome, world-eyed Truth!
 But there are other eyes men better love
 Than Truth's: for when we have her she is so cold,
 And proud, we know not what to do with her.

We cannot understand her, cannot teach;
 She makes us love her, but she loves not us;
 And quits us as she came and looks back never.
 Wherefore we fly to Fiction's warm embrace,
 With her to relax and bask ourselves at ease;
 And, in her loving and unhindering lap
 Voluptuously lulled, we dream at most
 On death and truth; she knows them, loves them not;
 Therefore we hate them and deny them both.
 Call up the dead.

Lucifer. Let rest while rest they may.
 For free from pain and from this world's wear and tear,
 It may be a relief to them to rot;
 And it must be that at the day of doom,
 If mortals should take up immortal life,
 They will curse me with a thunder which shall shake
 The sun from out the socket of his sphere.
 The curse of all created. Think on it.

Festus. Those souls thou meanest whom thou hast
 ruined, damned.

Lucifer. Nor only those; when once the virgin bloom
 Of soul is soiled—and rudely hath my hand
 Swept o'er the swelling clusters of all life—
 Little it matters whether crushed or touched
 Scarcely: each speaks the spoiler hath been there.
 The saved, the lost, shall curse me both alike:
 God too shall curse me, and I, I, myself.
 That curse is ever greatening—quick with hell;
 The coming consummation of all woe.

Festus. O man, be happy. Die and cease for ever.
 Why wear we not the shroud alway, that robe
 Which speaks our rank on earth, our privilege?
 To know I have a deathless soul I would lose it.

Lucifer. Believest thou all I tell thee?

Festus. All, I do.

Stringing the stars at random round her head,
 Like a pearl network, there she sits—bright Night!
 I love Night more than day—she is so lovely.
 But I love Night the most because she brings
 My love to me in dreams which scarcely lie;
 Oh, all but truth and lovelier oft than truth;
 Let me have dreams like these, sweet Night, for ever,

When I shall wake no more ; an endless dream
Of love and holy beauty amid the stars ;
And earth and Heaven for me may share between them
The rough realities of other bliss.

Lucifer. I see thy heart and I will grant thy wish.
I have lied to thee. I have command over spirits.
I have beheld them, bodiless as space.
Whom wilt thou that I call ?

Festus. Mine Angela !

Lucifer. There is an Angel ever by thine hand.
What seest thou ?

Festus. It is my love. It is she !
My glory, spirit, beauty ! let me touch thee.
Nay do not shrink back ; well then I am wrong :
Thou wert not wont to shrink from me, my love.
Angela ! dost thou hear me ? Speak to me.
And thou art there—looking alive and dead.
Thy beauty is then incorruptible.
I thought so, oft as I have looked on thee.
Thou art too much even now for me as once.
I cannot gather what I raved to say ;
Nor why I had thee hither. Stay, sweet sprite !
Dear art thou to me now, as in that hour
When first Love's wave of feeling, spray-like broke
Into bright utterance, and we said we loved.
Yea, but I must come to thee. Move no more !
Art thou in death or Heaven, or from the stars ?
Have I done wrong in calling for thee thus ?
What art thou ? Speak, love ; whisper me as wont
In the dear times gone by ; or durst thou not
Unfold the mystery of thine and mine
Own being ? Was it death who hushed thy lips ?
Is his cold finger there still ? Let me come !
She is not !

Lucifer. And thou canst not bring her back.

Festus. I will not, cannot be without her. Call her.

Lucifer. I call on spirits and I make them come :
But they depart according to their own will.
Another time and she shall speak with thee.
For, of thy state no more, to know her thou
Into her sphere must rise. She of the passed
Shall there fulfil thy spirit ; and, holding forth

The bright clue, which like lightning's friendly flash
 Before one, night-lost in a wood, shall guide
 The soul its path through life's returnless maze,
 And teach the mystery of thyself. All this
 Ere long—and she shall shew thee where she dwells,
 And how doth pass her immortality ;
 If lengthening decay can so be called.
 Can lines finite one way be infinite
 Another? And yet such is deathlessness.

Festus. It is hard to deem that spirits cease, that
 thought

And feeling flesh-like perish in the dust.
 Shall we know those again in a future state
 Whom we have known and loved on earth? Say yes!

Lucifer. The mind hath features as the body hath.

Festus. But is it mind which shall rerise?

Lucifer.

Man were

Not man without the mind he had in life.

Festus. Shall all defects of mind and fallacies
 Of feeling be immortalized? all needs,
 All joys, all sorrows, be again gone through,
 Before the final crisis be imposed?
 Shall Heaven but be old Earth created new?
 Or earth, treelike, transplanted into Heaven,
 To flourish by the waters of all life,
 And we within its shade, as heretofore,
 Cropping its fruit, with life-seeds cored at heart?

Lucifer. Man's nature, physical and psychical,
 Will be together raised, changed, glorified;
 And all shall be alike, like God; and all
 Unlike each other, and themselves. The earth
 Shall vanish from the thoughts of those she bore,
 As have the idols of the olden time
 From men's hearts of the present. All delight
 And all desire shall be with Heavenly things,
 And the new nature God bestowed on man.

Festus. Then man shall be no more man, but an angel.

Lucifer. When he is dead and buried what remains,—
 That such an obscure, contradictory thing
 Should be perpetuated anywhere?

Festus. Oh! if God hates the flesh, why made He it
 So beautiful that e'en its semblance maddens?

Am I to credit what I think I have seen?
Or am I suffering some deceit of thine?

Lucifer. I am explaining, not deluding.

Festus.

True.

Defining night by darkness, death by dust.
I run the gauntlet of a file of doubts,
Each one of which down hurls me to the ground.
I ask a hundred reasons what they mean,
And every one points gravely to the ground
With one hand, and to Heaven with the other.
In vain I shut mine eyes. Truth's burning beam
Forces them open; and when open, blinds them.

Lucifer. Doubly unhappy!

Festus.

I am too unhappy

To die; as some too way-worn cannot sleep.
Planets and suns, that set themselves on fire
By their own rapid self-revolvements, are
But like some hearts. Existence I despise.
The shape of man is wearisome; a bird's—
A worm's—a whirlwind's—I would change with aught.
Time! dash thine hour-glass down. Have done with this.
The course of Nature seems a course of Death,
And nothingness the sole substantial thing.

Lucifer. Corruption springs from light: 'tis the same
power

Creates, preserves, destroys: the matter which
It works on, being one ever-changing form,—
The living, and the dying, and the dead.

Festus. I'll not believe a thing which I have known.
Hell was made hell for me, and I am mad.

Lucifer. True venom churns the froth out of the lips;
It works, and works, like any waterwheel.
And she then was the maiden of thy heart.
Well, I have promised. Ye shall meet again.
Now, shall we go?

Festus.

This moment. I am ready.

Farewell ye dear old walks and trees; farewell
Ye waters; I have loved ye well. In youth
And childhood it hath been my life to drift
Across ye lightly as a leaf; or skim
Your waves in yon skiff, swallowlike; or lie
Like a loved locket on your sunny bosom.

Could I, like you, by looking in myself,
Find mine own Heaven—farewell! Immortal, come!
The morning peeps her blue eye on the east.

Lucifer. Think not so fondly as thy foolish race,
Imagining a Heaven from things without;
The picture on the passing wave call Heaven—
The wavelet, life—the sands beneath it, death;
Daily more seen till, lo! the bed is bare.
This fancy fools the world.

Festus.

Let us away!

SCENE—*A Mountain—Sunrise.*

FESTUS and LUCIFER.

Festus. Hail beauteous Earth! Gazing o'er thee, I all
Forget the bounds of being; and I long
To fill thee, as a lover pines to blend
Soul, passion, yea existence, with the fair
Creature he calls his own. I ask for nought
Before or after death but this,—to lie,
And look, and live, and bask, and bless myself
Upon thy broad bright bosom. From thee I
Sprang, and to thee I turn, heart, arm, and brain.
Yes, I am all thine own. Thou art the sole
Parent. To rock and river, plain and wood,
I cry, ye are my kin. While I, O Earth!
Am but an atom of thee, and a breath,
Passing unseen and unrecorded, like
The tiny throb here in my temple's pulse.
Thou art for ever; and the sacred bride
Of Heaven—worthy the passion of our God.
O! full of light, love, grace!—the grace of all
Who owe to thee their life; thy Maker's love;
His face's light. All thine rejoice in thee;
Thou in thyself for aye; rolling through air,
As seraphs' song, out of their trumpet lips,
Rolls round the skies of Heaven. See the sun!
God's crest upon His azure shield the Heavens.
Canst thou, a spirit, look upon him?

Lucifer.

Ay.

I led him from the void, where he was wrought,

By this right hand, up to the glorious seat
 His brightness overshadows; built his throne
 On piles of gold, and laid his chambers on
 Beams of gold; wrapped a veil of fire around
 His face, and bade him reign and burn like me.
 There, ever since, sat warming into life
 These worlds as in a nest, he has and is.
 But fall he must. I have done, do, nought else
 From my first thought to this and to my last.
 No matter; it is beneath this mind of mine
 To reckon of aught. I bear, have borne the ill
 Of ages, of eternities—and must.
 I care not. I shall sway the world as now;
 Which worse and worse sinks with me as I sink,
 Till finite souls vanish as a vapour;
 Till immortality, the proud thing, perish;
 And God alone be and eternity.
 Then will I clap my hands and cry to Him,
 I have done! Have Thy will now! There is none but
 Thee.

I am the first created being. I
 Will be the last to perish and to die.

Festus. Thou art a fit monitor, methinks, of pleasure.

Lucifer. To the high air sunshine and cloud are one;
 Pleasure and pain to me. Thou and the earth
 Alone feel these as different—for ye
 Are under them—the Heavens and I above.

Festus. But tell me, have ye scenes like this in hell?

Lucifer. Nay, not in Heaven.

Festus. What is Heaven? not the toys
 Of singing, love, and music? Such a place
 Were fit for women only.

Lucifer. Heaven is no place;
 Unless it be a place with God, allwhere.
 It is the being good—the knowing God—
 The consciousness of happiness and power;
 With knowledge which no spirit e'er can lose,
 But doth increase in every state; and aught
 It most delights in the full leave to do.
 But why consume me with such questions? Why
 Add earth to hell, in the great chain of worlds
 Which God in wrath hath bound about me?

Festus.

Why!

'Twas therefore that I closed with thee, great Fiend!
 That thou might'st answer all things I proposed,
 Or bring me those who would do.

Lucifer.

All these things

Thou wilt know sometime, when to see and know
 Are one; to see a thing and comprehend
 The nature of it essentially; perceive
 The reason and the science of its being,
 And the relations with the universe
 Of all things actual or possible,
 Mortal, immortal, spiritual, gross.
 This, when the spirit is made free of Heaven,
 Is the divine result; proportioned still
 To the intelligence as human; for
 There are degrees in Heaven, as everything,
 By God's will. Unimaginable space,
 As full of suns as is earth's sun of atoms,
 Faileth to match His boundless variousness:
 And ever must do, though a thousand worlds,
 As diverse from each other as is thine
 From any of thy system's, were elanced
 Each minute into life unendingly.
 All of yon worlds, and all who dwell in them,
 Stand in diverse degrees of bliss and being.
 Through the ten thousand times ten thousandth grade
 Of blessedness, above this world's and man's
 Ability to feel or to conceive,
 The soul may pass and yet know nought of Heaven,
 More than a dim and miniature reflection
 Of its most bright infinity;—for God
 Makes to each spirit its peculiar Heaven.
 And yet is Heaven a bright reality,
 As this or any of yon worlds; a state
 Where all is loveliness, and power, and love;
 Where all sublimest qualities of mind
 Not infinite, are limited alone
 By the surrounding Godhood; and where nought,
 But what produceth glory and delight,
 To creature and Creator, is; where all
 Enjoy entire dominion o'er themselves,
 Acts, feelings, thoughts, conditions, qualities,
 Spirit, and soul, and mind; all under God,

For spirit is soul Deified ;—while earth,
To the immortal vast, God-natured spirit,
Is but a spell, which having served to light
A lamp, is cast into consuming fire.

Festus. And hell ? Is it nought but pits, and chains,
and flames ?

Lucifer. An ever greatening sense of ill and woe,
Aye crushing down the soul, but filling never
Its infinite capacity of pain.

Festus. But human nature is not infinite,
And therefore cannot suffer endlessly.

Lucifer. God may create in time what shall endure
Unto eternity. With Him is no
Distinction, nor in that which is of Him.

Festus. Then is not soul of God, but man and earth.
Soul when made spirit is of earth no more,
Nor time, but of eternity and Heaven.
It is but when in the body, and bent down
To worldly ends, that human souls become
Objects of time, as most are, till the hour
Comes when the soul of man shall be made one
With God's spirit ; and where shall woe be then ?
Where sin ? where suffering ? when the mortal soul
Shall be Divinized and eternized by
God's very spirit put upon it ?

Lucifer. How
Can souls begotten to predestined doom,
From and before all worlds, be deemed of earth ?

Festus. Things spiritual, as belonging God,
Are known unto Him, and predestined from
Eternity ; nor these alone ; but flesh
Forms not, nor does it need the care of Fate.

Lucifer. The object of eternal knowledge must
Have like existence.

Festus. Then it cannot be
Bound unto torment ; that would be to bring
Torture on godlike essence.

Lucifer. Hast not heard,
How thine existence here, on earth, is but
The dark and narrow section of a life
Which was with God, long ere the sun was lit ;
And shall be yet, when all the bold bright stars
Are dark as death-dust—Immortality

And Wisdom tending thee on either hand,
Thy divine sisters? But do thou believe
E'en what thou wilt. It matters not to me.

Festus. Is it the nature or the deed of God
To render finite follies infinite,
Or to eternize sin and death in fire?
For so long as the punishment endures,
The crime lasts. Were it not for thy presence,
Spirit! I would not deem hell were.

Lucifer. Let not
My presence pass for more than it is worth,
I pray, nor yet my absence. Trust me, I
Could wish, with thee, that hell were blotted out
Of utmost space. 'Tis man himself aye makes
His own God and his hell. But this is truth.

Festus. The truth is perilous never to the true,
Nor knowledge to the wise; and to the fool,
And to the false, error and truth alike.
Error is worse than ignorance. But say:—
How can eternal punishment be due
To temporal offences, to a pulse
Of momentary madness?

Lucifer. Pardon me.
Sin is not temporary. Nothing is,
Of spiritual nature, but hath cause
Premortal and immortal end in all,
As spirits. Therefore till the soul shall be
By grace redeified, as is the soul,
So is the sin, for ever before God.

Festus. Sin is not of the spirit, but of that
Which blindeth spirit, heart and brain.

Lucifer. Believe so.
The law of all the worlds is retribution.

Festus. But is it so of God?

Lucifer. The laws of Heaven
Are not of earth; there law is liberty.

Festus. Thou thundercloud of spirits, darkening
The skies and wrecking earth! Could I hate men
How I should joy with thee, even as an eagle,
Nigh famished, in the fellowship of storms;
But I still love them. What will come of men?

Lucifer. Whatever may, perdition is their meed.

Were Heaven dispeopled for a ministry
 To warn them of their ways; were thou and I
 To monish them; were Heaven, and Earth, and Hell
 To preach at once, they still would mock and jeer
 As now; but never repent until too late;
 Until the everlasting hour had struck.

Festus. Men might be better if we better deemed
 Of them. The worst way to improve the world
 Is to condemn it. Men may overget
 Delusion—not despair.

Lucifer. Why love mankind?
 The affections are thy system's weaknesses;
 The wasteful outlets of self-maintenance.

Festus. The wild flower's tendril, proof of feebleness,
 Proves strength; and so we fling our feelings out,
 The tendrils of the heart, to bear us up.
 O Earth! how drear to think to tear oneself,
 Even for an hour, from looks like this of thine;
 From features, oh! so fair; to quit for aye
 The luxury of thy side. Why, why art thou
 Thus glorious, and 'twere not to sate the soul,
 And chide us for the senseless dream of Heaven?
 The still strong stream sweeps onward to its end,
 Like one of the great purposes of God;
 Or like, may be, a soul like mine to Him.
 Along yon deep blue vein upon thy bosom,
 Earth! I could float for ever. See it there—
 Winding among its green and smiling isles,
 Like Charity amidst her children dear;
 Or Peace, rejoicing in her olive wreaths,
 And gladdening as she glides along the lands.

Lucifer. And yet all this must end—must pass; drop
 down
 Oblivion, like a pebble in a pit:
 For God shall lay His hand upon the earth,
 And crush it up like a red leaf.

Festus. Not be?
 I cannot root the thought, nor hold it firm.

Lucifer. This same sweet world which thou would'st
 fondly deem
 Eternal, may be; which I soon shall see
 Destruction suck back as the tide a shell.

Festus. It will not be yet. I'll woo thee, world, again ;
 And revel in thy loveliness and love.
 I have a heart with room for every joy :
 And since we must part some time, while I may,
 I'll quaff the nectar in thy flowers, and press
 The richest clusters of thy luscious fruit
 Into the cup of my desires. I know
 My years are numbered not in units yet.
 But I cannot live unless I love and am loved ;
 Unless I have the young and beautiful
 Bound up like pictures in my book of life.
 It is the intensest vanity alone
 Which makes us bear with life. Some seem to live,
 Whose hearts are like those unenlightened stars
 Of the first darkness—lifeless, timeless, useless—
 With nothing but a cold night air about them ;
 Not suns—not planets—darkness organized :
 Orbs of a desert darkness : with no soul
 To light its watchfire in the wilderness,
 And civilize the solitude one moment.
 There are such, seemingly ; but how or why
 They live I know not. This to me is life :
 That if life be a burden, I will join
 To make it but the burden of a song :
 I hate the world's coarse thought. And this is life ;
 To watch young beauty's budlike feelings burst
 And load the soul with love ;—as that pale flower,
 Which opes at eve, spreads sudden on the dark
 Its yellow bloom, and sinks the air down with sweets.
 Let Heaven take all that's good—Hell all that's foul ;
 Leave us the lovely ! and we will ask no more.

Lucifer. To me it seems time all should end. The sky
 Grows gray. It is not so bright nor blue as once.
 Well I remember, as it were yesterday,
 When Earth and Heaven went happy, hand in hand,
 With all the morning dew of youth about them ;
 With the bright unworldly hearts of youth and truth,
 And the maiden bosoms of the beautiful :—
 Ere earth sinned, or the pure indignant Heavens
 Retreated high, nigh God ; when earth was all
 A creeping mass alive with shapeless things :
 And when there were but three things in the world—

Monsters, mountains, and water : before age
 Had thickened the eyes of stars ; and while the sea,
 Rejoicing like a ring of saints round God,
 Or Heaven on Heaven about some newborn sun,
 In its sublime samesoundingness, laughed out
 And cried, not I ! Like God I never rest.

Festus. God hath His rest, earth hers. Let me have mine.

Yet must I look on thee, fair scene, again,
 Ere I depart. The glory of the world
 Is on all hands. In one encircling ken,
 I gaze on river, sea, isle, continent,
 Mountain, and wood, and wild, and fire-lipped hill,
 And lake, and golden plain, and sun, and Heaven,
 Where the stars brightly die, whose death is day.
 City and port and palace, ships and tents,
 Lie massed and mapped before me. All is here.
 The elements of the world are at my feet,
 Above me and about me. Now would I
 Be and do somewhat beside that I am.
 Canst thou not give me some æthereal slave,
 Of the pure essence of an element—
 Such as my bondless brain hath oftentimes drawn
 In the divine insanity of dreams—
 To stand before me and obey me, spirit ?

Lucifer. Call out, and see if aught arise to thee.

Festus. Green dewy Earth, who standest at my feet
 Singing and pouring sunshine on thy head,
 As naiad native water, speak to me !
 I am thy son. Canst thou not now, as once,
 Bring forth some being dearer, liker to thee
 Than is my race—titan or tiny fay,
 Stream-nymph or wood-nymph ? She hath ceased to
 speak,
 Like God, except in thunder ; or to look,
 Unless in lightning. Miracles, with earth,
 Are out of fashion as with Heaven.

Lucifer. More's
 The pity. Call elsewhere. Old earth is hard
 Of hearing, maybe.

Festus. I beseech thee, Sea !
 Tossing thy wavy locks in sparkling play,

Like to a child awakening with the light
To laughter. Canst not thou dis gulph for me,
From thy deep bosom, deep as Heaven is high,
Of all thy sea-gods one, or sea-maids ?

Lucifer.

None ?

Festus. I half despair. Fire ! that art slumbering there,
Like some stern warrior in his rocky fort,
After the vast invasion of the world,
Hast not some flaming imp, or messenger
Of empyrean element, to whom,
In virtue of his nature, are both known
The secrets of the burning, central, void below,
And yon bright Heaven, out of whose aëry fire
Are wrought the forms of angels and the thrones ?
Hast none at hand to do my bidding ? Come !
Breathe out a spirit for me ! One I ask
That shall be with me always, as a friend,
And not like thee, who despotizest o'er
The heart thou seek'st to serve. I must be free.

Lucifer. All finite souls must serve ; their widest sway
Is but the rule of service. This fair earth
Which thou dost boast so much of, why, thou see'st
It is but the parti-coloured, scummy dross
Of the original element wherefrom
The fiery worlds were framed.

Festus.

Air ! and thou, Wind !

Which art the unseen similitude of God
The Spirit, His most meet and mightiest sign :
The earth with all her steadfastness and strength,
Sustaining all, and bound about with chains
Of mountains, as is life with' mercies ; ranging round
With all her sister orbs the whole of Heaven,
Is not so like the unlikenable One
As thou. Ocean is less divine than thee ;
For although all but limitless, it is yet
Visible, many a land not visiting.
But thou art, Lovelike, everywhere ; o'er earth,
O'er ocean triumphing ; and aye with clouds
That like the ghosts of ocean's billows roll,
Decking or darkening Heaven. The sun's light
Floweth and ebbeth daily like the tides ;
The moon's doth grow or lessen, night by night ;

The stirless stars shine forth by fits and hide ;
 And our companion planets come and go ;
 And all are known, their laws and liberties.
 But no man can foreset thy coming, none
 Reason against thy going ; thou art free,
 The type impalpable of Spirit, thou.
 Thunder is but a momentary thing,
 Like a world's deathrattle, and is like death ;
 And lightning, like the blaze of sin, can blind
 Only and slay. But what are these to thee,
 In thine all-present variousness ? Now,
 So light as not to wake the snowiest down
 Upon the dove's breast, winning her bright way
 Calm and sublime as Grace unto the soul,
 Towards her far native grove ; now, stern and strong
 As ordnance, overturning tree and tower ;
 Cooling the white brows of the peaks of fire ;
 Turning the sea's broad furrows like a plough ;
 Fanning the fruitening plains ; breathing the sweets
 Of meadows ; wandering over blinding snows ;
 And sands like sea-beds ; and the streets of cities,
 Where men as garnered grain lie heaped together ;
 Freshening the cheeks, and mingling oft the locks
 Of youth and beauty 'neath star-speaking eve ;
 Swelling the pride of canvas, or, in wrath,
 Scattering the fleets of nations like dead leaves ;
 In all, the same o'ermastering sightless force ;
 Bowing the highest things of earth to earth,
 And lifting up the dust unto the stars ;
 Fatelike confounding reason, and like God's
 Spirit, conferring life upon the world,—
 Midst all corruption incorruptible ;
 Monarch of all the elements ! hast thou
 No soft Æolian sylph, with sightless wing,
 To spare a mortal for an hour ?

Lucifer.

Peace, peace !

All nature knows that I am with thee here ;
 And that thou need'st no minor minister.
 To thee I personate the world—its powers,
 Beliefs, and doubts, and practices.

Festus.

Aro all

Mine invocations fruitless, then ?

Lucifer.

They are.

Let us enjoy the world !

Festus.

If 'twas God's will

That thou shouldst visit me, He shall not send

Temptation to my heart in vain. Sweet world !

We all still cling to thee. Though thou thyself

Passes away, yet men will hanker about thee,

Like mad ones by their moping haunts. Men pass,

Cleaving to things themselves which pass away,

Like leaves on waves. Thus all things pass for ever,

Save mind and the mind's need.

Lucifer.

Let us too pass !

SCENE—*A Country Town—Market-place—Noon.*

LUCIFER and FESTUS.

Lucifer. These be the toils and cares of mighty men !

Earth's vermin are as fit to fill her thrones

As these high Heaven's bright seats.

Festus.

Men's callings all

Are mean and vain ; their wishes more so : oft

The man is bettered by his part or place.

How slight a chance may raise or sink a soul !

Lucifer. What men call accident is God's own part.

He lets ye work your will—it is His own :

But that ye mean not, know not, do not, He doth.

Festus. What is life worth without a heart to feel

The great and lovely, and the poetry

And sacredness of things ? for all things are

Sacred,—the eye of God is on them all,

And hallows all unto it. It is fine

To stand upon some lofty mountain-thought,

And feel the spirit stretch into a view ;

To joy in what might be if will and power

For good would work together but one hour.

Yet millions never think a noble thought :

But with brute hate of brightness bay a mind

Which drives the darkness out of them, like hounds.

Throw but a false glare round them, and in shoals

They rush upon perdition : that's the race.

What charm is in this world-scene to such minds

Blinded by dust? What can they do in Heaven,
A state of spiritual means and ends?
Thus must I doubt—perpetually doubt.

Lucifer. Who never doubted never half believed.
Where doubt there truth is—'tis her shadow. I
Declare unto thee that the passed is not.
I have looked over all life, yet never seen
The age that had been. Why then fear or dream
About the future? Nothing but what is, is;
Else God were not the Maker that He seems,
As constant in creating as in being.
Embrace the present. Let the future pass.
Plague not thyself about a future. That
Only which comes direct from God, His spirit,
Is deathless. Nature gravitates without
Effort; and so all mortal natures fall
Deathwards. All aspiration is a toil;
But inspiration cometh from above,
And is no labour. The earth's inborn strength
Could never lift her up to yon stars, whence
She fell; nor human soul, by native worth,
Claim Heaven as birthright, more than man may call
Cloudland his home. The soul's inheritance,
Its birth-place, and its death-place, is of earth;
Until God maketh earth and soul anew;
The one like Heaven, the other like Himself.
So shall the new Creation come at once;
Sin, the dead branch upon the tree of Life,
Shall be cut off for ever; and all souls
Concluded in God's boundless amnesty.

Festus. Thou windest and unwindest faith at will.
What am I to believe?

Lucifer. Thou mayest believe
But that which thou art forced to.

Festus. Then I feel
That instinct of immortal life in me,
Which prompts me to provide for it.

Lucifer. Perhaps.

Festus. Man hath a knowledge of a time to come—
His most important knowledge: the weight lies
Nearest the short end: and the world depends
Upon what is to be. I would deny

The present, if the future. Oh ! there is
A life to come, or all's a dream.

Lucifer. And all
May be dream. Thou seest in thine, men, deeds,
Clear, moving, full of speech and order ; then
Why may not all this world be but a dream
Of God's ? Fear not ! Some morning God may waken.

Festus. I would it were. This life's a mystery.
The value of a thought cannot be told ;
But it is clearly worth a thousand lives
Like many men's. And yet men love to live
As if mere life were worth their living for.
What but perdition will it be to most ?
Life's more than breath and the quick round of blood :
It is a great spirit and a busy heart.
The coward and the small in soul scarce do live.
One generous feeling—one great thought—one deed
Of good, ere night, would make life longer seem
Than if each year might number a thousand days,—
Spent as is this by nations of mankind.
We live in deeds, not years ; in thoughts, not breaths ;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most—feels the noblest—acts the best.
Life's but a means unto an end—that end
Beginning, mean and end to all things—God.
The dead have all the glory of the world.
Why will we live and not be glorious ?
We never can be deathless till we die.
It is the dead win battles. And the breath
Of those who through the world drive like a wedge,
Tearing earth's empires up, nears death so close
It dims his well worn scythe. But no ! the brave
Die never. Being deathless, they but change
Their country's arms for more—their country's heart.
Give then the dead their due : it is they who saved us.
The rapid and the deep—the fall, the gulph,
Have likenesses in feeling and in life.
And life, so varied, hath more loveliness
In one day than a creeping century
Of sameness. But youth loves and lives on change
Till the soul sighs for sameness ; which at last

Becomes variety, and takes its place.
 Yet some will last to die out, thought by thought,
 And power by power, and limb of mind by limb,
 Like lamps upon a gay device of glass,
 Till all of soul that's left be dry and dark ;
 Till even the burden of some ninety years
 Hath crashed into them like a rock ; shattered
 Their system as if ninety suns had rushed
 To ruin earth—or heaven had rained its stars ;
 Till they become, like scrolls, unreadable,
 Through dust and mould. Can they be cleaned and read ?
 Do human spirits wax and wane like moons ?

Lucifer. The eye dims and the heart gets old and slow ;
 The lithe limbs stiffen, and the sun-hued locks
 Thin themselves off or whitely wither ; still
 Ages not spirit, even in one point,
 Immeasurably small ; from orb to orb,
 In ever rising radiance, shining like
 The sun upon the thousand lands of earth.
 Look at the medley, motley throng we meet !
 Some smiling—frowning some ; their cares and joys
 Alike not worth a thought—some sauntering slowly,
 As if destruction never could overtake them ;
 Some hurrying on, as fearing judgment swift
 Should trip the heels of death, and seize them living.

Festus. Grief hallows hearts even while it ages heads ;
 And much hot grief, in youth, forces up life
 With power which too soon ripens and which drops.

[*A Funeral passes.*]

Ah ! what is this ? A mystery, sure resolved.
 I felt as fascinated towards this spot.
 A beckoning as of bright invisible hands
 I could not choose but follow. It was for this,
 Doubtless.

Lucifer. O strange, most strange coincidence !
 Behold those three fair maiden mourners. Well,
 It is something, in default of other means,
 To leave fair friends behind one. Speak to them.

Festus. That were I nowise loth to do. But stay ;
 My heart is not an anvil ; and the blow
 Which grief hath struck me, needs not to be paired ;
 Or they might breed for ever.

Lucifer.

Speak to them.

Festus. Why, yes, I'll speak to them; I know them all
As they knew her they follow. Yet, methinks,
All knowing, to ask curiously seems ill.

Lucifer. To learn what others know seems only well.

Festus. Whose funeral is this ye follow, friends?

Lucifer. Would ye have grief, let me come. I am woe.

Mourner. We want no grief, Festus! she died of grief.

Festus. Did ye say she died? Oh, I knew her, then.
Set down the body; let me look upon her.

Now, Son of God! what dost Thou now in Heaven,
While one so beautiful lies earthening here?

I will give up the future for the past;
The wingéd spirit and the starry home,
If Thou wilt let her live and make me love.

Clara. I feel as though her spirit hovered near;
Holy and pure it wafts me with its wings.

Elissa. Their shadows strike across me. Let us move.
Friends wait for us all sorrowing where her sires
Sleep in the marbled minster.

Festus. Heed them not;
Our duty, this day, waits on destiny.

Lucifer. Canst thou not spare to these her sister friends,
Whose eyes with grief's salt baptism run o'er;
And who, like mourning starlets, weep the end
Of their once brightest, one consoling word?

Festus. Their solace mine; her sometime to rejoin.
Were ye not with her when she died?

Helen. We were.
She left among us a bequest which I

Dare not accept, nor now name; but it drew
From our torn hearts a promise as the steel
Magnetic from a wound the painful speck.

Festus. For me to know might haply both console.

Clara. But never wilt thou know it from my lips.

Helen. She bade all cherish thee for her dear sake;
And gave thee her forgiveness.

Festus. Shade divine!
Spirit immortal and immaculate, hear!
Speak!

Elissa. What! Art mad? Wouldst have a spirit here;
And in the day's broad eye?

Lucifer.

Why not ?

Elissa.

Grant, Heaven !

I only swoon.

Festus. Swoon not, but brace thy heart
To its true tension. It may have yet to bear
Unheard-of woes. Speak, spirit, that our poor ears
May grow rich treasures of thy golden words.

Elissa. Nay, wish not back from her paternal Heavens
The pure ghost, self-congratulative ere now,
Of its translated life.

Festus.

She comes no more.

Clara. Nor would she, save by night, when her fair
feet,
Threading the shiny mazes of the stars,
May bring us helpful hope, by grace divine ;
Or us perchance premonish.

Lucifer.

Voice is none.

Festus. No, all is still ; and still, right well I know,
If aught behoves me learn by token, dream,
Vision, or sign, or visitation, I
Shall learn it ; and like truly do ye know,
Ye heedful, faithful, faultless few, her friends,
Where'er her spirit dwells, she dwells in full
Regality of nature ; crowned with power,
And clothed with purity, and girt with grace.
Her air was an immortal's. I have seen
Stars look on it with feeling ; and her eye,
Where'er it went it won her way like wine.
Men bowed to it as to the lifted Host.

Mourner. She was a love-gift Heaven once gave to
earth,
And took again, because unworthy of her.

Festus. And will ye gaze again upon her face ?
Draw nigh. But knee the majesty of Death.

Helen. Speak, thou beloved sister of my heart !
Death shall be loyal to thee ; nought shall change
Thy form's marmoreal loveliness. All truth
Thou holdest now, all knowledge. Speak to us !

Clara. No ; she is silent in the hand of Death ;
Soothed by his touch perchance, like a young bird
Dreadless ; incredulous of cruel fate.

Festus. Soul of my spirit ! Spirit of my soul !

Clara. Thou didst but dip thy wing in life's dark stream,
And then away. We, wondering, watched thee whilst.

Elissa. How hath the white rose conquered on this cheek!

This fair and final field of Death and life.

Life is no match for Death since thou art fled;

The balance of existence is no more.

Let us begone, where thou art gone, to Heaven.

Mourner. And yet we weep thee, weep thee, all of us.

Festus. How could I be so cruel? Who but I?

O faithful as the moon-crowned night to Heaven,

In pure recurrent beauty, is then this

Saddest of trysts our last; or do we yet

Meet in the far off future?

Lucifer. Much depends.

Elissa. And is there no remorse?

Clara. No blame?

Helen. No wrong?

Festus. Why are ye troubled thus, and your clear souls
Made for a moment turbid? Can ye grieve
As I grieve? Ye, as I be wretched? No!
But though it claims no pre-established course,
Yet give a torrent place; 'twere wise; 'twere wise.

Mourner. The moment after thou desertedst her,
A cloud came over the prospect of her life;
And I foresaw how evening would set in,
Early and dark and deadly. She was true.

Festus. Did I not love thee, too? pure, perfect thing;
This is a soul I see and not a body.

Go, beauty, rest for aye; go starry eyes,

And lips like rosebuds peeping out of snow;

Go, breast love-filled as a boat's sail with wind,

Leaping from wave to wave as leaps a child

Thoughtless, o'er grassy graves; go, locks, which have

The golden embrownment of a lion's eye.

Yet one more look; farewell, thou well and fair!

All who but loved thee shall be deathless. Nought

Named if with thee can perish. Thou and Death

Have made each other purer, lovelier seem,

Like snow and moonlight. Never more for thee

Let eyes be swollen, like streams with latter rains.

To die were rapture, having lived with thee.
 Thy soul hath passed out of a bodily Heaven,
 Into a spiritual. Rest for aye ;
 Pure after love as e'er thou wast before ;
 Pure as the dead in life. The dead are holy.
 I would I were among them.

Elissa.

Let us hence.

Festus. Nay, not so soon shalt thou unbless mine eyes.
 I turn, and turn to tread the round of fate
 As worshippers of old their templed tombs ;
 And lo ! thy tomb, thy temple is my heart.

Clara. She is no more in man's hand ; but in God's.

Festus. So young, so lovely, so adored. Thy years
 The moon's sweet cycle scarce had run ; and now,
 O ! recommence in Heaven thy dateless course !
 Our souls were so, so delicately attuned,
 A scarce discernible discord, a lapsed word,
 An inconsiderate eye-glance thrilled through both,
 With well-nigh fatal jar. And now, and now !
 What is there I'd not give, again to know
 This bosom's lightest swell, which once, 'gainst mine,
 For pardon craved, or granted, a mere thought,
 Beat like the billows of the sea of life ?
 And now corruption, come ; sit, sate thyself.
 This is the choicest revel thou hast been at.
 Thou art my happier, only rival ; thou
 Who takest love from the living—life from beauty—
 Beauty from Death—whole robber of the world !

Helen. Oh, Heaven is happier now that thou art there.
 Sweetest of human spirits ; and for us
 Enough, the blessing to have known thee here.

Festus. It is so. All the blessings of my life
 Seem sweeping past precipitately, as with
 The footfall of a cataract : hope and peace ;
 Youth's primal innocence ; and, fled with these,
 Thou, happy spirit, serene, seraphic ! Yes !
 Thou, too, art gone ! Upon thy brow, no more
 Fair seer of lucent eye shall see ray forth
 The inborn crownlet ; crown of light or fire,
 All wear, all work, unweeting, for themselves ;
 Dewbright was thine. Closed are thine eyes for aye,
 Those deep dark jets of light ; that pearly hand

Gifted with whitest witchery, to convoke
 Pure beings that beset our sunshot path,
 Gleams with the seal of power no more. No more
 The star-throned rulers of the spherul Heavens
 Obey thy bidding here. On other shores
 The kings of thought salute thee. Thou hast passed
 The river of judgment; and the saintly land
 Of the elect immortals guests thee now.
 Wait thou awhile to welcome me: not long;
 For thought's substantial shadows, things create
 Of our own mind vivific, me forewarn,
 Like eastern slaves, lip-fingered, menacing mutes;
 Death is at hand. O injudicious judge!
 Justice unjust; what though the world must die,
 Was this her time? What more can time unrol?
 Can life replevy on the house of death?
 Can truth unteach the promise of the passed?
 Can earth remass the wealth of worship thou
 Outpouredst at my feet, more than numb age,
 That feast of lips, that banquet of the breast,
 Which Paradisal youth yields yet to all?
 No! thou art gone. Oh, never till the hour
 When the great Gatherer, with His spirit hand,
 Hath culled the ripe worlds from the tree of Life,
 Shall, sunlike, set in its illumined grave
 Another head, sacred as thine. Farewell,
 Thou fair perfection of the universe;
 I turn to thee, the prayer-point of my soul;
 And swear, by all the hopes I have of death,
 I had more prized all wretchedness with thee,
 Than joy with others. Fate, fulfil thy scheme.
 Demand thy fee. There's nought worth reckoning left.
 The fair configurations of my life
 Are passed away. Lingers alone in air
 One pale malignant star; that star, mine own.

Lucifer. Oh, we'll think better sometime of our stars.
 Myself, by fits, feel faintly saturnine;
 Given to low spirits, and so forth. But have care,
 Or thou wilt drain these lovely eyes of tears
 That may be wanted yet.

Festus. This in thine ear.
 Blood is more easily shed than tears, by men;

And I would spare some heart-drops from their fount,
 When every drop were worth a year of life,
 Rather than now these glittering traitors fell.
 But not less be thou silent. Let these weep.
 It is well that I have mingled tears with theirs.
 Fair Eden's rivers had one only head,
 And flowed into one outfall: our great dole,
 Like vent. And now though I wander round the world,
 Each step but brings me nearer to the grave;
 Her grave.

Elissa. Perchance, there, we may meet again?

Lucifer. Lovely lamenters! We again will meet.

Festus. Peace, soulless spirit.

Lucifer. Peace is all I ask.

Festus. Let us rejoice for her; for ourselves mourn;
 Wholly and individually. Art thou glad?
 Remember whom we grieve for now; art sad?
 Reflect that she is bliss. Mere happiness
 Is of ourselves; but blessedness of God.
 And so rejoice, fair mourners, and farewell.

Lucifer. O ignorance sublime! O innocence!
 What would I risk to know ye, and believe!

Festus. Behold them slowly westering on their way,
 Like those bright lights that head Heaven's starry bier.

Lucifer. Each hath a special grace.

Festus. But as I live—

Lucifer. Come, that is cheering; not a minute since
 At the last gasp I deemed thee.

Festus. I marked not
 Their several charms, opponent or in trine.

Lucifer. Thou shalt love all at will.

Festus. I hear thee not.
 Suffer my silence.

Lucifer. This is somewhat dull.
 There is a mean with him as all: and now,
 Ere my free promises too soon condense
 Into more gross utilities, it were well
 I from this sacred and supernal love
 His heart should alienate; and, time by time,
 With some calm passion, or—I have them yet
 Before me in mine eye, with rival fair
 Less serious, fonder of the lures of life,

And youth's gay converse; shallow joys, but still
Quite deep enough to drown—assort him.

Festus.

Hope!

Where dwells she?

Lucifer.

Hope? in dreamland. Sometime soon

Or never at the furthest, we'll hie thither.

But in the interval more substantial ends

Will better suit us. Life hath claims on thee.

Festus. Living is but a habit; and I mean
To break myself of it soon.

Lucifer. Too soon thou canst not,

When that is preappointed stands achieved.

Meantime I half think with thee; and much grieve

Men heed not of the day, how nigh none knows,

Which brings the consummation of the world.

But in mine ear the old machine already

Begins to grate. They would not credit warning,

Or I would up and ery repent! I will.

Here's a fair gathering and I feel moved.

Mortals, repent! the world is nigh to its end;

On its last legs, and desperately sick.

See ye not how it reels round all day long?

Boys. Oh! here's a ranter. Come, here's fun. Amen.

I know the church service by heart.

Bystander.

Be off!

You'll serve the church by keeping out of it.

Lucifer. I am a preacher come to tell ye truth.

I tell ye too there is no time to be lost;

So fold your souls up neatly, while ye may;

Direct to God in Heaven; or some one else

May seize them, seal them, send them—you know where.

The world must end. I weep to think of it.

But you, you laugh! I knew ye would. I know

Men never will be wise till they are fools

For ever. Laugh away! The time will come,

When tears of fire are trickling from your eyes,

You will blame yourselves for having laughed at me.

I warn ye, men: prepare; repent; be saved.

I warn ye, not because I love but know ye.

God will dissolve the world, as she of old

Her pearl, within His cup, and swallow ye

In wrath: although to taste ye would be poison,

And death and suicide to aught but God.
Again I warn ye. Save himself who can !
Do ye not oft begin to seek salvation ?
You ? you ? and fail, as oft, to find ? Sink ? Cease ?
And shall I tell ye, brethren, why ye fail
Once and for ever ? why, there is no passed ;
And the future is the fiction of a fiction ;
The present moment is eternity ;
It is that ye have sucked corruption from the world
Like milk from your own mothers ; it is in
Your soul-blood and your soul-bones. Earth does not
Wean one out of a thousand sons to Heaven.
Beginnings are alike : it is ends which differ.
One drop falls, lasts, and dries up—but a drop ;
Another begins a river : and one thought
Settles a life, an immortality :
And that one thought ye will not take to good.
Now I will tell ye just one other truth :
Ye hate the truth as snails salt—it dissolves ye,
Body and soul—but I don't mind. So, now :
Up to this moment ye are all, each, damned.
What are ye now ? still damned ! It will be the same
To-morrow—and the next day—and the next :
Till some fine morning ye will wake in fire.
Ye see I do not mince the truth for ye.
Belike you think your lives will dribble out
As brooks in summer dry up. Let us see !
Try : dike them up : they stagnate—thicken—scum.
That would make life worse than death. Well, let go !
Where are ye then ? for life, like water, will
Find its last level ; what level ? The grave.
It is but a fall of five feet after all ;
That cannot hurt ye ; it is but just enough
To work the wheel of life ; so work away !
Ye may think that I do not know the terms
And treasures whereupon ye live so high.
But I know more than most men, modestly
Speaking. I know I am lost, and you too. God
Could only save me by destroying me ;
So that I have no advantage over you ;
And therefore think ye will the rather bear
One of your own state to advise for ye.

Now don't you envy me, good folks, I pray,—
 Envy's a coal comes hissing hot from hell.
 'Twill be such coals will burn ye, by the way.
 Your other preachers first think they are safe.
 Now I say broadly I am the worst among ye;
 And God knows I have no need to wrong myself,
 Nor you. I boast not of it, but as truth;
 It is little to be proud of, credit me.
 What is salvation? What is safety? Think!
 Who wants to know? Does any?

The Crowd.

All of us.

Lucifer. Then I will not tell ye. You shall wait until
 Some angel come and stir your stagnant souls:
 Then plunge into yourselves and rise redeemed.
 Come, I'll unroll your hearts and read them to ye.
 To say ye live is but to say ye have souls,
 That ye have paid for them, and mean to play them,
 Till some brave pleasure wins the golden stake,
 And rakes it up to death as to a bank.
 Ye live and die on what your souls will fetch;
 And all are of different prices: therefore Hell
 Cannot well bargain for mankind in gross;
 But each soul must be purchased, one by one.
 This it is makes men rate themselves so high:
 While truly ye are worth little: but to God
 Ye are worth more than to yourselves. By sin
 Ye wreak your spite against God—that ye know;
 And knowing, will it. But I pray, I beg,
 Act with some smack of justice to your Maker,
 If not unto yourselves. Do! It is enough
 To make the very Devil chide mankind—
 Such baseness, such unthankfulness! Why he
 Thanks God he is no worse. You don't do that.
 I say be just to God. Leave off these airs:
 Know your place; speak to God—and say, for once,
 Go first, Lord; take your finger off your eye.
 It blocks the universe and God from sight.
 Think ye your souls are worth nothing to God?
 Are they so small? What can be great with God?
 What will ye weigh against the Lord? Yourselves?
 Bring out your balance: get in, man by man:
 Add earth, heaven, hell, the universe; that's all.

God puts His finger in the other scale,
And up we bounce, a bubble. Nought is great
Nor small with God—for none but He can make
The atom indivisible, and none
But He can make a world: He counts the orbs,
He counts the atoms of the universe,
And makes both equal—both are infinite.
Giving God honour, never underrate
Yourselves: after Him ye are everything.
But mind! God's more than everything; He is God.
And what of me? No, us? no! I mean the Devil?
Why see ye not he goes before both you
And God? Men say—as proud as Lucifer—
Pray who would not be proud with such a train?
Hath he not all the honour of the earth?
Why Mammon sits before a million hearths,
Where God is bolted out from every house.
Well might He say He cometh as a thief;
For He will break your bars and burst your doors,
Which slammed against Him once, and turn ye out,
Roofless and shivering, 'neath the doom-storm; Heaven
Shall crack above ye like a bell in fire,
And bury all beneath its shining shards.
He calls, ye hear not. Lo! He comes—ye see not.
No; ye are deaf as a dead adder's ear:
No; ye are blind as never bat was blind,
With a burning, bloodshot blindness of the heart;
A swimming, swollen, senselessness of soul.
Listen! Whom love ye most? Why, him to whom
Ye in your turn are dearest. Need I name?
Oh no! But all are devils to themselves;
And every man his own great foe. Hell gets
Only the gleanings; earth hath the full wain;
And hell is merry at its harvest home.
But ye are generous to sin and grudge
The gleaners nothing; ask them, push them in.
Let not an ear, a grain of sin be lost;
Gather it, grind it up; it is our bread:
We should be ashamed to waste the gifts of God.
Why is the world so mad? Why runs it thus
Raving and howling round the universe?
Because the Devil bit it from the birth!

The fault is all with him. Fear nothing, friends ;
It is fear which beds the far to-come with fire,
As the sun does the west : but the sun sets ;
Well : still ye tremble—tremble, first at light,
Then darkness. Tremble ! ye dare not believe.
No, cowards ! sooner than believe ye would die ;
Die with the black lie flapping on your lips,
Like the soot-flake upon a burning bar.
Be merry, happy if ye can : think never
Of him who slays your souls, nor Him who saves.
There is time enough for that when ye are a-dying.
Keep your old ways ! It matters not this once.
Be brave ! Ye are not men whom meat and wine
Serve to remind but of the Sacrament ;
To whom sweet shapes and tantalizing smiles
Bring up the Devil and the ten commandments—
And so on. But I said the world must end.
I am sorry ; it is such a pleasant world ;
With all its faults it is perfect—to a fault ;
And you, of course, end with it. Now how long
Will the world take to die ? I know ye place
Great faith upon death-bed repentances ;
The suddener the better. I know ye often
Begin to think of praying and repenting ;
But second thoughts come and ye are worse than ever ;
As over new white snow a filthy thaw.
Ye do amaze me verily. How long
Will ye take heart on your own wickedness,
And God's forbearance ? Have ye cast it up ?
Come, now ; the year and month, day, hour, and minute,
Sin's golden cycle ? Do ye know how long
Exactly, Heaven will grant ye ; how long God,—
Who when He had slain the world and wasted it,
Hung up His bow in Heaven, as in his hall
A warrior after battle—will yet bear
Your contumely and scorn of his best gifts,—
Man's mockery of man ? But never mind !
Some of us are magnificently good,
And hold the head up high, like a giraffe ;
You, in particular, and you—and you.
Good men are here and there, I know ; but then,—
You must excuse me if I mention this,

My duty is to tell it you—the world,
Like a black block of marble, jagged with white,
As with a vein of lightning petrified,
Looks blacker than without such ; looks, in truth,
So gross the heathen, gross the Christian too—
Like the original darkness of void space,
Hardened. Instead of justice, love, and grace,
Each worth to man the mission of a God,
Injustice, hate, uncharitableness,
Triequal reign round earth, a Trinity of Hell.
Ye think ye never can be bad enough ;
And as ye sink in sin ye rise in hope.
And let the worst come to the worst, you say,
There always will be time to turn ourselves,
And cry for half an hour or so to God :
Salvation, sure, is not so very hard—
It need not take one long ; and half an hour
Is quite as much as we can spare for it.
We have no time for pleasures. Business ! business !
No ! ye shall perish sudden and unsaved.
The priest shall, dipping, die. Can man save man ?
Is water God ? The counsellor, wise fool !
Drop down amid his quirks and sacred lies.
The judge, while dooming unto death some wretch,
Shall meet at once his own death, doom, and judge.
The doctor, watch in hand and patient's pulse,
Shall feel his own heart cease its beats—and fall.
Professors shall spin out, and students strain
Their brains no more ; art, science, toil, shall cease.
The world shall stand still with a rending jar,
As though it struck at sea. The halls where sit
The heads of nations shall be dumb with death.
The ship shall after her own plummet sink,
And sound the sea herself and depths of death.
At the first turn Death shall cut off the thief,
And dash the gold bag in his yellow brain.
The gambler, reckoning gains, shall drop a piece :
Stoop down and there see death ;—look up, there God.
The wanton, temporizing with decay,
And qualifying every line which vice
Writes bluntly on the brow, inviting scorn,
Shall pale through plastered red : and the loose low sot

See clear, for once, through his misty, o'erbrimmed eye.
 The just, if there be any, die in prayer.
 Death shall be everywhere among your marts;
 And giving bills which no man may decline—
 Drafts upon hell one moment after date.
 Then shall your outcries tremble amid the stars:
 Terrors shall be about ye like a wind;
 And fears come down upon ye like a house.

Festus. Yon man looks frightened.

Lucifer. Then it is time to stop.

I hope I have done no good. He will soon forget
 His soul. Flesh soaks it up as sponge does water.
 Now wait; I will rub them backwards like a cat;
 And you shall see them spit and sparkle up.
 Let us suppose a case, friends. You are men;
 And there is God! and I will be the Devil.
 Very well. I am the Devil.

One says. I think you are.

You look as if you lived on buttered thunder.

Lucifer. Nay, be not wroth. Ye would crucify the
 Devil,

I do believe, if he a moment vexed you.
 I know well which ye choose; but choose again!
 Time or eternity? Speak, Hell or Heaven?

The Crowd. He's a mad ranter: down with him!—

Festus. Let him be!

Lucifer. Stand by me, Festus! and I will by thee.
 Why, God and man! this is the second time
 That I have run for my life.

Festus. Nay, nay, come back!

They will not harm thee: they would chair thee round
 The market-place, knew they but whom thou art.
 Peace there, my friends! one minute; let us pray!
 Grant us, O God! that in Thy holy love
 The universal people of the world
 May grow mere great and happy every day;
 Mightier, wiser, humbler, too, towards Thee.
 And that all ranks, all classes, callings, states
 Of life, so far as such seem right to Thee,
 May mingle into one, like sister trees,
 And so in one stem flourish:—that all laws
 And powers of government be based and used

In good, and for the people's sake ;—that each
May feel himself of consequence to all,
And act as though all saw him ;—that the whole,
The mass of every nation, may so do
As is most worthy of the next to God ;
For a whole people's souls, each one worth more
Than a mere world of matter, make combined
A something godlike—something like to Thee.
We pray Thee for the welfare of all men.
Let monarchs who love truth and freedom feel
The happiness of safety and respect
From those they rule, and guardianship from Thee.
Let them remember they are set on thrones
As representatives, not substitutes,
Of nations, to implead with God and Man.
Let tyrants who hate truth, or fear the free,
Know that to rule in slavery and error,
For the mere ends of personal pomp and power,
Is such a sin as doth deserve a hell
To itself sole. Let both remember, Lord !
They are but things like-natured with all nations ;
That mountains issue out of plains, and not
Plains out of mountains, and so likewise kings
Are of the people, not the people of kings.
And let all feel, the rulers and the ruled,
All classes and all countries, that the world
Is Thy great halidom ; that Thou art King,
Lord, only owner and possessor. Grant
That nations may now see, it is not kings,
Nor priests, they need fear so much as themselves ;
That if they keep but true to themselves, and free,
Sober, enlightened, godly—mortal men
Become impassible as air ; one great
And indestructible substance as the sea.
Let all on thrones and judgment-seats reflect
How dreadful Thy revenge through nations is
On those who wrong them ; but do Thou grant, Lord
That when wrongs are to be redressed, such may
Be done with mildness, speed, and firmness ; not
With violence or hate, whereby one wrong
Translates another—both to Thee abhorrent.
The bells of time are ringing changes fast.

Grant, Lord! that each fresh peal may usher in
An era of advancement, that each change
Prove an effectual, lasting, happy gain.
And we beseech Thee, overrule, O God!
All civil contests to the good of all;
All party and religious difference
To honourable ends, whether secured
Or lost; and let all strife, political
Or social, spring from conscientious aims,
And have a generous, self-ennobling end,
Man's good and Thine own glory in view always.
The best may then fail and the worst succeed,
Alike with honour. We beseech Thee, Lord!
For bodily strength, but more especially
For the soul's health and safety. We entreat Thee
In Thy great mercy to decrease our wants,
And add autumnal increase to the comforts
Which tend to keep men innocent, and load
Their hearts with thanks to Thee as trees in bearing:
The blessings of friends, families, and homes,
And kindnesses of kindred. And we pray
That men may rule themselves in faith in God,
In charity to each other, and in hope
Of their own souls' salvation:—that the mass,
The millions in all nations, may be trained,
From their youth upwards, in a nobler mode,
To loftier and more liberal ends. We pray
Above all things, Lord! that all men be free
From bondage, whether of the mind or body;
The bondage of religious bigotry,
And bald antiquity; servility
Of thought or speech to rank and power; be all
Free as they ought to be in mind and soul,
As well as by state-birth right; and that Mind,
Time's giant pupil, may right soon attain
Majority, and speak and act for himself.
Incline Thou to our prayers, and grant, O Lord!
That all may have enough, and some safe mean
Of worldly goods and honours, by degrees,
Take place, if practicable, in the fitness
And fulness of Thy time. And we beseech Thee,
That truth no more be gagged, nor conscience dungeoned;

Nor Science be impeached of godlessness ;
Nor faith be circumscribed, which as to Thee,
And the soul's self affairs, is infinite ;
But that all men may have due liberty
To speak an honest mind, in every land ;
Encouragement to study, leave to act
As conscience orders. We entreat Thee, Lord !
For thy Son's sake, to take away reproach
Of all kinds from Thy church ; and all temptation
Of pomp or power political, that none
May err in the end for which they were appointed
To any of its orders, low or high ;
And no ambition, of a worldly cast,
Leaven the love of souls unto whose care
They feel propelled by Thy most Holy Spirit.
Be every church established, Lord ! in truth.
Let all who preach the word, live by the word,
In moderate estate ; and in Thy church,—
One, universal, and invisible,
World-wards, yet manifest unto itself,
May it seem good, dear Saviour, in Thy sight,
That orders be distinguished, not by wealth,
But piety and power of teaching souls.
Equalize labour, Lord ! and recompense.
Let not a hundred humble pastors starve,
In this or any land of Christendom,
While one or two, impalaced, mitred, throned
And banquetted, burlesque if not blaspheme
The holy penury of the Son of God ;
The fastings, the footwanderings, and the preachings
Of Christ and His first followers. . Oh, that the Son
Might come again ! There should be no more war,
No more want, no more sickness ; with a touch,
He should cure all disease, and with a word,
All sin ; and with a look to Heaven, a prayer,
Provide bread for a million at a time.
But till that perfect advent, grant us, Lord !
That all good institutions, orders, claims,
Charitably proposed, or in the aid
Of Thy divine foundation, may much prosper,
And more of them be raised and nobly filled ;
That Thy word may be taught throughout all lands,

And save souls daily to the thrones of Heaven!—
Enriched, empowered, emboldened by Thy Spirit,
We dare to ask for all things in Thy name;
We dare to pray for all that live or die.
Man dies to man; but all to Thee, God, live.
We pray Thee, therefore, for the general dead;
Man's universal race, extinct in flesh,
But in the spirit immortal; not alone
For those who died unwitting of all truth,
But whose souls opening after like a flower
In finer air, may compass more than we;
Not only for the sage, saint, seer of old
Who saw Thy truth but darkly, felt Thy light
But feebly, yet, unfaltering held the faith,
That the good God who made all, all decrees,
Allots and blesses all, in this life, man
May trust like lovingly for life to come.
Not only therefore for the wise of yore,
But for the mass unwise of all times, now,
Passed and to come; who boast not of Thy love,
Nor glory in Thy name; but spurn Thy law,
Nor keep Thy precepts; for the wicked man
Who hates Thy righteousness; and for the good
Who his own preacheth; for the scorner who
Despiset Thy humility, Most High!
The ignorant who Thy Providence misdoubts;
The dark inverted soul who sees not Thee;
The bigot who maligns Thee, Lord! for all,
Quick, dead, we ask Thy boundless mercy, more
Than all sin, all defect, as infinite
O'erlaps all finites. But by us be none
Condemned. Shall culprits take the Judge's seat?
Christ's lesson of forgiveness mote not we
Forget. If they who wrought earth's crowning crime
Were of His intercession worthy, Lord!
Of whom shall fellow-sinners, like ourselves,
Despair? To whom shall mercy hope deny?
And we entreat Thee, that all men whom Thou
Hast gifted with great minds may love Thee well,
And praise Thee, for their powers, and use them most
Humbly and holily, and, lever-like,
Act but in lifting up the mass of mind

About them ; knowing well that they shall be
 Questioned by Thee of deeds the pen hath done,
 Or caused, or glozed ; inspire them with delight
 And power to treat of noble themes and things,
 Worthily, and to leave the low and mean—
 Things born of vice or day-lived fashion, in
 Their naked native folly :—make them know
 Fine thoughts are wealth, for the right use of which
 Men are and ought to be accountable,
 If not to Thee, to those they influence.
 Grant this, we pray Thee, and that all who read
 Or utter noble thoughts may make them theirs,
 And thank God for them, to the betterment
 Of their succeeding life ;—that all who lead
 The general sense and taste, too apt, perchance,
 To be led, keep in mind the mighty good
 They may achieve, and are in conscience bound,
 And duty, to attempt unceasingly
 To compass. Grant us, All-maintaining Sire !
 That all the great mechanic aids to toil
 Man's skill hath formed, found, rendered, — whether
 used
 In multiplying works of mind, or aught
 To obviate the thousand wants of life,
 May much avail to human welfare now ;
 And in all ages henceforth and for ever.
 Let their effect be, Lord ! to lighten labour,
 And give more room to mind, and leave the poor
 Some time for self-improvement. Let them not
 Be forced to grind the bones out of their arms
 For bread, but have some space to think and feel
 Like moral and immortal creatures. God !
 Have mercy on them till such time shall come ;
 Look Thou with pity on all lesser crimes,
 Thrust on men almost when devoured by want,
 Wretchedness, ignorance, and outcast life !
 Have mercy on the rich, too, who pass by
 The means they have at hand to fill their minds
 With serviceable knowledge for themselves,
 And fellows ; and support not the good cause
 Of the world's better future. Oh, reward
 All such who do, with peace of heart, and power

For greater good. Have mercy, Lord! on each
And all, for all men need it equally.
May peace and industry, and commerce, weld
Into one land all nations of the world,
Rewedding those the Deluge once divorced.
Oh! may all help each other in good things,
Mentally, morally, and bodily.
Vouchsafe, kind God! Thy blessing to this isle,
Specially. May our country ever lead
The world, for she is worthiest; and may all
Profit by her example, and adopt
Her course, wherever great, or free, or just.
May all her subject colonies and powers
Have of her freedom freely, as a child
Receiveth of its parents. Let not rights
Be wrested from us to our own reproach,
But granted. We may make the whole world free,
And be as free ourselves as ever, more!
If policy or self-defence call forth
Our forces to the field, let us in Thee
Place, first, our trust, and in Thy name we shall
O'ercome; for we will only wage the right.
Let us not conquer nations for ourselves,
But for Thee, Lord! who hast predestined us
To fight the battles of the future now,
And so have done with war before Thou comest.
Till then, Lord God of armies! let our foes
Have their swords broken and their cannon burst,
And their strong cities levelled; and while we
War faithfully and righteously, improve,
Civilize, christianize, the lands we win
From savage or from nature, Thou, O God!
Wilt aid and hallow conquest, as of old,
Thine own immediate nation's. But we pray
That all mankind may make one brotherhood,
And love and serve each other; that all wars
And feuds die out of nations; whether those
Whom the sun's hot light darkens, or ourselves
Whom he treats fairly, or the northern tribes
Whom ceaseless snows and starry winters blench;
Savage or civilized,—let every race,
Red, black or white, olive, or tawny-skinned,

Settle in peace and swell the gathering hosts
 Of the great Prince of Peace. Oh! may the hour
 Soon come when all false gods, false creeds, false prophets,—
 Allowed in Thy good purpose for a time,
 Demolished,—the great world shall be at last
 The mercy-seat of God, the heritage
 Of Christ, and the possession of the Spirit,
 The Comforter, the Wisdom! shall all be
 One land, one home, one friend, one faith, one law;
 Its ruler God, its practice righteousness,
 Its life peace! For the one true faith we pray;
 There is but one in Heaven, and there shall be
 But one on earth, the same which is in Heaven.
 Prophecy is more true than history.
 Grant us our prayers, we pray, Lord! in the name
 And for the sake of Thy Son Jesus Christ,
 Our Saviour and Redeemer, who with Thee,
 And with the Holy Spirit, reigneth God
 Over all worlds, one blessed Trinity.—

The Crowd. Amen!

Lucifer. Well, friends, we'll sing a hymn; then part.
 I give it out, and you sing—all of you.

Oh! Earth is cheating Earth
 From age to age for ever;
 She laughs at faith and worth,
 And dreams she shall die never;
 Never, never, never!
 And dreams she shall die never.

And Hell is cursing Hell
 From age to age for ever;
 Its groans ring out the knell
 Of souls that may die never;
 Never, never, never!
 Of souls that may die never.

But Heaven is blessing Heaven
 From age to age for ever;
 And its thanks to God are given
 For bliss that can die never;
 Never, never, never!
 For bliss that can die never.

My blessing be upon ye all; now go!

Festus. I wonder what these people make of thee.

Lucifer. Ay, manner's a great matter.

Festus.

They deserve

All the rebuke thou gavest them, and more.
 What mountains of delusion men have reared !
 How every age hath hustled on to build
 Its shadowy mole—its monumental dream !
 How faith and fancy, in the mind of man,
 Have spuriously mingled, and how much
 Shall pass away for aye, as pass before
 Yon sun, the Lord of steadfastness and change,
 The visionary landscapes of the skies ;
 The golden capes far stretching into Heaven ;
 The snow-piled cloud crags ; the bright wingéd isles
 Which dot the deep impassive ocean air,
 Like a disbanded rainbow, of all hues,
 Fit for translated fairy's Paradise ;
 Or as before the eye of musing child,
 The faces Fancy forms in clouds and fire,
 Of glowing angel or of darkening fiend.
 Arts, superstition, arms, philosophy,
 Have each in turn possessed, betrayed, and mocked us.
 Yes, vain philosophy, thine hour is come !
 Thy lips were lined with the immortal lie,
 And dyed with all the look of truth. Men saw,
 Believed, embraced, detested, cast thee off.
 Those lights, the morn of Truth's immortal day,
 As thou didst falsely swear them, have they not
 Vanished, the mere auroras of the mind ?
 And thou didst vow to gather clear again
 The fallen waters of humanity ;
 To smoothe the flaw from out an eye ; to piece
 A pounded pearl. Thank God ! I am a man ;
 Not a philosopher. Rivers may rot,
 Never revive the root of oak firebolted.
 Come, let us to the hills ! where none but God
 Can overlook us ; for I hate to breathe
 The breaths and think the thoughts of other men,
 In close and clouded cities, where the sky
 Frowns like an angry father mournfully.
 I love the hills and I love loneliness ;
 And oh ! I love the woods, those natural fances
 Whose very air is holy ; and we breathe

Of God ; for He doth come in special place,
And, while we worship, He is there for us.

Lucifer. It is time that something should be done for
the poor.

The sole equality on earth is death ;
Now, rich and poor are both dissatisfied.
I am for judgment : that will settle both.
Nothing is to be done without destruction.
Death is the universal salt of states ;
Blood is the base of all things—law and war.
I could tame this lion age to follow me.
I should like to macadamize the world ;
The road to hell wants mending.

Festus.

Come away

SCENE—*Alcove and Garden.*

FESTUS and CLARA.

Festus. What happy things are youth and love and
sunshine !

How sweet to feel the sun upon the heart !
To know it is lighting up the rosy blood,
And with all joyous feelings, prism-hued,
Making the dark breast shine like a spar grot.
We walk among the sunbeams as with angels.

Clara. Yes, there are feelings so serene and sweet,
Coming and going with a musical lightness,
That they can make amends for their passingness,
And balance God's condition to decay ;
As yon light fleecy cloudlet floating along,
Like golden down from some high angel's wing,
Breaks, but relieves and beautifies the blue.
I wonder if ever I could love another.
How I should start to see upon the sward
A shadow not thine own armlinked with mine ;
See, here is a garland I have bound for thee.

Festus. Nay, crown thyself ; it will suit thee better, love.
Place wreaths of everlasting flowers on tombs,
And deck with fading beauties forms that fade.
Put it away. I will no crown save this ;
And could the line of dust which here I trace

Upon my brow but warrant dust beneath—
 And nothing more—or could this bubble frame,
 Informed with soul, lashed from the stream of life
 By its own impetus, but burst at once,
 And vanish, part on high and part below,
 I would be happy, nor would envy death.
 Could I, like Heaven's bolt, earthening, quench myself,
 This moment would I burn me out a grave.
 Might I but be as many years in dying
 As I have lived—that might be some relief.

Clara. What canst thou mean?

Festus. Mean? Is there not a future!
 The past, the present, and the coming—curse each!
 The future, curse it!

Clara. Shall we not ever live
 And love as now?

Festus. Ay, live I fear we must.

Clara. And love: because we then are happiest.
 We shall lack nothing having love: and we,
 We must be happy everywhere—we two!
 For spiritual life is great and clear,
 And self-continuous as the changeless sea,
 Rolling the same in every age as now;
 Whether o'er mountain-tops, where only snow
 Dwells, and the sunbeam hurries coldly by;
 Or o'er the vales, as now, of some old world,
 Older than ancient man's. As is the sea's,
 So is the life of spirit, and the kind.

And then with natures raised, refined, and freed
 From these poor forms, our days shall pass in peace
 And love; no thought of human littleness
 Shall cross our high calm souls, shining and pure
 As the gold gates of Heaven. Like some deep lake
 Upon a mountain summit they shall rest,
 High above cloud and storm of life like this,
 All peace and power, and passionless purity;
 Or, if a thought of other troubled times
 Ruffle it for a moment, it shall pass
 Like a chance raindrop on its heavenward face.
 I love to meditate on bliss to come.
 Not that I am unhappy here; but that
 The hope of higher bliss may rectify

The lower feeling which we now enjoy.
 This life, this world is not enough for us :
 They are nothing to the measure of our mind.
 For place we must have space ; for time we must have
 Eternity ; and for a spirit godhood.

Festus. Mind means not happiness ; power is not
 good.

Clara. True bliss is to be found in holy life ;
 In charity to man—in love to God ;
 Why should such duties cease, such powers decay ?
 Are they not worthy of a deathless state—
 A boundless scope—a high uplifted life ?
 Man, like the air-born eagle, who remains
 On earth only to feed, and sleep, and die ;
 But whose delight is on his lonely wing,
 Wide sweeping as a mind, to force the skies,
 High as the lightfall ere begirt with clouds,
 It dash this nether world—immortal man
 Rushes aloft, right upwards, into Heaven.
 O faith of Christ, sole honour of the world !

Festus. What know men of religion, save its forms ?

Clara. True faith nor biddeth nor abideth form.
 The bended knee, the eye uplift is all
 Which man need render ; all which God can bear.
 What to the faith are forms ? A passing speck,
 A crow upon the sky. God's worship is
 That only He inspires ; and His bright words,
 Writ in the red-leaved volume of the heart,
 Return to Him in prayer, as dew to Heaven.
 Our proper good we rarely seek or make ;
 Mindless of our immortal powers and their
 Immortal end, as is the pearl of its worth,
 The rose its scent, the wave its purity.

Festus. Come, we will quit these saddening themes.

Wilt sing

To me ? for I am gloomy : and I love
 Thy singing, sacred as the sound of hymns
 On some bright Sabbath morning, on the moor,
 Where all is still, save praise ; and where, hard by,
 The ripe grain shakes its bright beard in the sun ;
 The wild bee hums more solemnly ; the deep sky,
 The fresh green grass, the sun, and sunny brook.

All look as if they knew the day, the hour;
And felt with man the need and joy of thanks.

Clara. I cannot sing the lightsome lays of love.
Many thou know'st who can; but none that can
Love thee as I do—for I love thy soul;
And I would save it, Festus! Listen then:

Is Heaven a place where pearly streams
Glide over silver sand?
Like childhood's rosy dazzling dreams
Of some far faery land?
Is Heaven a clime where diamond dew
Glitter on fadeless flowers?
And mirth and music ring aloud
From amaranthine bowers?

Ah no; not such, not such is Heaven!
Surpassing far all these;
Such cannot be the guerdon given
Man's wearied soul to please.
For saint and sinner here below
Such vain to be have proved:
And the pure spirit will despise
Whate'er the sense hath loved.

There we shall dwell with Sire and Son,
And with the mother-maid,
And with the Holy Spirit, one!
In glory like arrayed:
And not to one created thing
Shall our embrace be given;
But all our joy shall be in God;
For only God is Heaven.

Festus. I know that thou dost love me. I in vain
Strive to love aught of earth or Heaven but thee.
Thou art my first, last, only love; nor shall
Another even tempt my heart. Like stars,
A thousand sweet, and bright, and wondrous fair,
A thousand deathless miracles of beauty,
They shall ever pass at all but eyeless distance,
And never mix with thy love; but be lost
All meanly in its moonlike lustrousness.

Clara. How still the air is! the tree tops stir not:
But stand and peer on Heaven's bright face, as though
It slept and they were loving it: they would not
Have the skies see them move for summers; would they?
See that sweet cloud! It is watching us, I am certain.

What have we here to make thee stay one second ?
 Away ; thy sisters wait thee in the west,
 The blushing bridesmaids of the sun and sea.
 I would I were like thee, thou little cloud,
 Ever to live in Heaven : or seeking earth
 To let my spirit down in drops of love :
 To sleep with night upon her dewy lap :
 And the next dawn, back with the sun to Heaven :
 And so on through eternity, sweet cloud !
 I cannot but think that some senseless things
 Are happy. Often and often have I watched
 A gossamer line sighing itself along
 The air, as it seemed ; and so thin, thin and bright,
 Looking as woven in a loom of light,
 That I have envied it, I have, and followed ;—
 Oft watched the sea-bird's down blown o'er the wave,
 Now touching it, now spirited aloft,
 Now out of sight, now seen, till, in some bright fringe
 Of streamy foam, as in a cage, at last
 A playful death it dies ; and mourned its death.

Festus. Surely thou camest straightwise from the stars,
 And instantly from Heaven ; thy calm bright thought,
 Pure as the roseate snow on polar plains
 In starlike flakelets falling, soothes my mind.
 And well thou deemest of celestial things,
 And high-born duties dedicate to earth.
 To dignify the day with deeds of good,
 And constellate the eve with holy thoughts ;
 This is to live ; and let our lives narrate,
 In a new version, solemn and sublime,
 The grand old legend of Humanity.
 But thinkest thou the future is a state
 More positive than this ; or that it can be
 Aught but another present, full of cares,
 And toils, perhaps, and duties ; that the soul
 Will ever be more nigh to God than now,
 Save as may seem from mind's debility ;
 Just as the sun, from weakness of the eye,
 And the illusions made by matter's forms,
 Seems hot and wearied resting on the hill ?
 It would be well, I think, to live as though
 No more were to be looked for ; to be good

Because it is best, here : and leave hope and fear
 For lives below ourselves. If earth persuades not
 That I owe prayer, and praise, and love to God,
 While all I have He gives, will Heaven ? will hell ?
 No ; neither, never !

Clara. I think not all with thee.
 Have I not heard thee hint of spirit-friends ?
 Where are they now ?

Festus. Ah ! close at hand, mayhap.
 I have a might immortal ; and can ken
 With angels. Neither sky, nor night, nor earth
 Hinders me. Through the forms of things I see
 Their essences ; and thus, even now, behold—
 But where I cannot shew to thee—far round,
 Nature herself—the whole effect of God.
 Mind, matter, motion, heat, time, love, and life,
 And death, and immortality—those chief
 And first-born giants all are there—all parts,
 All limbs of her their mother : she is all.

Clara. And what does she ?

Festus. Produce : it is her life.
 The three I named last, life, death, deathlessness,
 Glide in elliptic path round all things made—
 For none save God can fill the perfect whole ;
 And are but to eternity as is
 The horizon to the world. At certain points
 Each seems the other ; now, the three are one ;
 Now, all invisible ; and now, as first,
 Moving in measured round. To me there seems
 A mocking, flickering likeness in their mien
 To some I know. Not seldom all I see,
 Or mix with, seems a fleeting masque prepared
 By some obsequious tyrant, bent on fraud ;
 Some despot servile to necessity ;
 Who, for his own ends, plants before our eyes
 The eternal phantom of the universe,
 And bids us call it real.

Clara. How look these beings ?

Festus. Ah ! Life looks gaily and gloomily in turns ;
 With a brow chequered like the sward, by leaves,
 Between which the light glints ; and she, careless wears
 A wreath of flowers—part faded and part fresh.

And death is beautiful, and sad, and still :
 She seems too happy ; happier far than life—
 In but one feeling, apathy : and on
 Her chill white brow frosts bright a braid of snow.

Clara. And Immortality ?

Festus. She looks alone ;
 As though she would not know her sisterhood.
 And on her brow a diadem of fire,
 Matched by the conflagration of her eye,
 Outflaming even that eye which in my sleep
 Beams close upon me till it bursts from sheer
 O'erstrainedness of sight, burns.

Clara. What do they ?

Festus. Each strives to win me to herself.

Clara. How ?

Festus. Death

Opens her sweet white arms and whispers, peace !
 Come say thy sorrows in this bosom ! This
 Will never close against thee ; and my heart,
 Though cold, cannot be colder much than man's.
 Come ! All this soon must end ; and soon the world
 Shall perish leaf by leaf, and land by land ;
 Flower by flower—flood by flood—and hill
 By hill away. Oh ! come, come ! Let us die.

Clara. Say that thou wilt not die !

Festus. Nay, I love death.
 But Immortality, with finger spired,
 Points to a distant, giant world—and says
 There, there is my home. Live along with me !

Clara. Canst see that world ?

Festus. Just—a huge shadowy shape ;
 It looks a disembodied orb—the ghost
 Of some great sphere which God hath stricken dead :
 Or like a world which God hath thought—not made.

Clara. Follow her, Festus ! Does she speak again ?

Festus. She never speaks but once : and now, in scorn,
 Points to this dim, dwarfed, misbegotten sphere.

Clara. Why let her pass ?

Festus. That is the great world-question.
 Life would not part with me ; and from her brow
 Tearing her wreath of passion-flowers, she flung
 It round my neck and dared me struggle then.

I never could destroy a flower : and none
 But fairest hands like thine can grace with me
 The culling of a rose. And Life, sweet Life !
 Vowed she would crop the world for me and lay it
 Herself before my feet even as a flower.
 And when I felt that flower contained thyself—
 One drop within its nectary kept for me,
 I lost all count of those strange sisters three :
 And where they be I know not. But I see
 One who is more to me.

Clara. I know not how
 Thou hast this power and knowledge. I but hope
 It comes from good hands ; if it be not thine
 Own force of mind. It is much less what we do
 Than what we think, which fits us for the future.
 I wish we had a little world to ourselves ;
 With none but we two in it.

Festus. And if God
 Gave us a star, what could we do with it
 But that we could without it ? Wish it not !

Clara. I'll not wish then for stars ; but I could love
 Some peaceful spot where we might dwell unknown ;
 Where home-born joys might nestle round our hearts
 As swallows round our roofs,—and blend their sweets,
 Like dewy tangled flowerets in one bed.
 See how yon cloudlet climbs the welkin lone,
 Like lambling strayed from some gold-fleecy flock,
 Low folded by the sun ; now, dimmer grown
 Upon the aëry mountain side ; and now,
 Absorbed into Heaven's infinite dome, it dies,
 Saintlike, on the invisible breast of God ;—
 Wherein is rest for all things. Thunder, there
 Complains no more ; nor the blue flashing levin,
 The seraphim and cherubim of storms ;
 But hushed to silence, and their tear-blind eyes
 Crushed to His fatherly bosom, sleep in peace.
 Peace, how divine ! Peace love I more than love.

Festus. The sweetest joy, the wildest woe, is love.
 The taint of earth, the odour of the skies,
 Is in it. Would that I were aught but man !
 The death of brutes, the immortality
 Of fiend or angel, better seems than all

The doubtful prospects of our painted dust.
 And all Morality can teach is—Bear !
 And all religion can inspire is—Hope !—

Clara. It is enough. Fruition of the fruit
 Of the great Tree of Life, is not for earth.
 Stars are its fruit, its lightest leaf is life.
 The heart hath many sorrows beside love ;
 Yea many as the veins which visit it.
 The love of aught on earth is not its chief,
 Nor ought to be. Inclusive of them all
 There is the one main sorrow, life ;—for what
 Can spirit, severed from the great one, God,
 Feel but a grievous longing to rejoin
 Its infinite—its author—and its end ?
 And yet is life a thing to be beloved,
 And honoured holily, and bravely borne.
 A man's life may be all ease, and his death,
 By some dark chance, unthought of agony :—
 Or life may be all suffering, and decease
 A flower-like sleep ;—or both be full of woe ;
 Or each comparatively painless. Blame
 Not God for inequalities like these.
 They may be justified. How canst thou know ?
 They may be only seeming. Canst thou judge ?
 They may be done away with utterly,
 By loving, fearing, knowing God the Truth.
 In all distress of spirit, grief of heart,
 Bodily agony, or mental woe,
 Rebuffs and vain assumptions of the world,
 Or the poor spite of weak and wicked souls,
 Think thou on God. Think what He underwent
 And did for us as man. Weigh thou thy cross
 With Christ's, and judge which were the heavier.
 Joy even in thine anguish ; such was His ;
 But measurelessly more. Thy suffering
 Assimilateth thee to Him. Rejoice !
 Think upon what thou shalt be. Think on God.
 Then ask thyself, what is the world, and all
 Its mountainous inequalities ? Ah, what !
 Are not all equal as dust-atomes ?

Festus. My soul's orb darkens as a sudden star,
 Which having for a time exhausted earth

And half the Heavens of wonder, mortally
 Passes for ever, not eclipsed, consumed ;
 All but a cloudy vapour darkening there,
 The very spot in space it once illumined.
 Once to myself I seemed a mount of light ;
 But now, a pit of night.—No more of this !
 For like a shipwrecked stranger in a lighthouse,
 I have looked down upon the utter side
 Of such thoughts, from the leeming room of reason,
 And beheld all beyond, black roaring madness.
 Here have I lain all day in this green nook,
 Shaded by larch and hornbeam, ash and yew ;
 A living well and runnel at my feet,
 And wild flowers dancing to some delicate air ;
 An urn-topped column and its ivy wreath
 Skirting my sight as thus I lie and look
 Upon the blue, unchanging, sacred skies :
 And thou, too, gentle Clara, by my side,
 With lightsome brow, and beaming eye, and bright
 Long glorious locks, which drop upon thy cheek
 Like goldhued cloudflakes on the rosy morn.
 Oh ! when the heart is full of sweets to o'erflowing,
 And ringing to the music of its love,
 Who but an angel or an hypocrite
 Could speak or think of happier states ?

Clara.

Farewell !

Remember what thou said'st about the stars.

Festus. Oh, yes ; I often think of them and thee.

Clara. Is that a secret ?

Festus.

Breathe it to none else.

Clara. I know not ; but a sadness that to me
 Feels mortally prophetic, weighs my heart down,
 At times much. Death, to wit, seems possible ;
 Change in the faith, perchance, of one of us ;
 And such like sad contingencies.

Festus.

Away

With baleful thoughts. Let joyance be our life.
 Well art thou Clara hight, for soul more bright,
 More lovely lives not out of Paradise.

Clara. I have another name whose element
 Is tears, they tell me. In the coming time,
 Who knows ? it may beseech me more than this.

Festus. Gainst that sad augury, set thou my resolve,
And be it fordone for ever.

Clara. Fate will prove.

But oh! I dread estrangement; dread to dream;
Lest even dreams should wrong thee; and thou act,
As, in Time's great betrothals, legends tell,
Man brake his vows and Nature's holy heart.
For I have heard how, once, in the head of days,
Man lived with Nature as his sacred bride,
In union pure and perfect. All her wealth
Which God had dowered her with; from the rich gems
That starred her sandals, and so lit her path,
To the predominant virtues of the spheres,
And latent life of elements; she to him,
For that her lord was poor though potent, gave.
He, too, with ampler thought and vital truth,—
Strewn in divine disorder like the stars,
Which to the ignorant mean nought, but to eye
• Instructed do configure boundless good;—
With mysteries elder than the fire-grained rocks,
And stories in eternal fable penned;
Aught worthy knowing was right early known;
So sanctified her spirit that she became
Like a created goddess. Her he taught
The life in life of faith; and how, all years,
For one clear hour, Earth hath the option now
To rest and ruin all things, but renew
Her virgin splendour and primæval bliss;
Or, bearing fate, like chance of equal meed
Secure the starry skies; these mark her thread,
Amid the hush of Heaven, the thronging spheres,
Who praise her footsteps breathless, and await
Her choice in charmed silence; she sweeps on.
Such holy confidence hath Earth in Heaven.
Thus intimate with Time's deep things and high,
They reigned like regal angels. To his kin
All powers and pleasures he promulged; and rites,
Omen and augury hallowing, rayed round shrines
Where gods might worship; and, beyond this, fed
His soul on secret wisdom, as on fasts
The spirit thriveth. These espoused, inspired
With their own harmonized perfections, lived

Long while in bliss and honour ; but, in fine,
 And in the heel of Time which treads us down,
 There came a change ; the wrong was surely man's ;
 For Nature fails not ; but how none hath shewn.
 Whether a too approving smile misled—
 Dim her ascent, but brilliant in her fall—
 Some emulative handmaid ; and what first
 Seemed zeal to serve, grew rivalry to please ;
 Or, fair confederates, faultless till they fell,
 Made strength vaunt of his failure, this we know ;
 Imperfect wearie of perfection sole.
 So he, the keystone loosed of loyalty,
 Lapsed from his liege love, warps his heart from her,
 Beauteous and bounteous as a sovereign saint ;
 And to a thousand lax and painted arts,
 Of barren glitter and unholy wiles ;
 Like sultan flaunting through his gay hareem,
 Flowered with the carnal beauties of all climes,
 Vows the idolatrous homage of his lips.
 His home he left ; and leaving, lost his rights
 O'er Nature's secret treasures. Keys, in vain,
 He forges ; locks he forces ; nought is there ;
 In vain conjures the elements ; these are born
 Of Nature's household, and are sworn to her.
 His tongue hath lost the simple spell of truth
 Neither believing nor believed, he roams,
 Peaceless and powerless, round his forfeit realm,
 Free, though as outcast. Yea, till he redeem
 His troth to Nature, she who was his queen,
 Ere consort ; and at her immaculate feet,
 Whiter than moonlit water, shall lay down
 For aye his falsehoods, brave through penitence,
 Nor rest, nor holy home will e'er be man's.

Festus. Neither was Nature perfect, as I thought.

Clara. Oh, is it possible thou hast never known
 How both derived their fates ? Wilt hear ?

Festus. Proceed.

Clara. Yon sun, world-eye, all-seeing, all beseen,
 Filling the sacred seven, and urns of fire,
 Had, time unlimited, lived debarred of life
 Soul-hallowed ; when our God, His kind intent,
 Now timefully matured, all things prepared,

Incarnated its spirit, and for mate
 Made him the lucid moon, now rolling round
 His disk immense, at fatal distance doomed.
 O Sun ! O Moon ! king of the skies and queen ;
 Hero and heroine of the universe !
 Daughter and son of God—lovers divine !
 How shall a feeble, humble tongue like mine
 Your fall sublime, sad but illustrious lapse,
 To mortal mind convey ? Free were they both
 To roam the skies ; or, if forbidden, aught
 Were named in Heaven's infinitude, so vast
 Their spatial liberty, no laws they knew ;
 But, written in the book divine of fate,
 One law there was. For ages unconceived,
 They nothing knew but light unshadowed, life,
 Love, liberty, unhaunted, undeformed
 By one divisive moment, or mere fear :
 Till, in the plains celestial wandering once,
 And Heaven till then no happier orbs embraced,
 A radiant path as though by feet of gods
 Trodden, star-littered, as earth, with golden seed
 Autumnal, on the gleaners' yellow road,
 They neared ; and where it brightly branched in twain,
 One listless moment separated ; but soon,
 Their spherul courses recombining, came
 To the vast portal of a luminous fane,
 Guarded by living forms of shapes unknown ;
 But void within. A vacant throne was all
 The dome divine contained ; upon whose steps
 A star-scaled serpent slumbered.

Festus.

Hold ! Thenceforth

One sole tradition streaks the stream of time ;
 From the dumb, tongueless ages of the passed,
 To Truth's eternal future. I, the sun
 See, smote by the star-bear's wide and wintry wound
 To yearly death, set neath the snake-wreathed pole ;
 Hiding in Hadean tomb his rayless crown.
 Again I see him majestic and serene,
 Though suffering from the unkindly detriment
 Which earthly nature, treacherous, him hath wrought.
 He quits the ærial desert ; lifts his head
 Glad, like wrecked swimmer, shorewards ; and salutes,

As with a kiss of fire, our hallowed earth,
 The threshold of his old abode, the Heavens.
 Once more in Heaven, the reascendent light
 Beams from the burning cross, which marks his course
 Triumphant o'er the lessening night ; once more
 The Lord of Nature lifts his conquering brow,
 As though from death eternal ; types of truths
 These, pressed upon Creation through all spheres,
 Material, mental, by God's hand and seal :
 Truths, which Time's ear for ages hears with awe
 Servile, nor knows their meaning ; as earth stunned
 With thunders, said of gods ; till some sage earns
 Heaven's humble secret ; and from man's freed mind
 The fiery fiction fades. Think thou no more
 Of ominous legend, or of man, or star.
 Stay. What would'st say yet ? There is something sad
 Darkens thy mind's disk. Speak it.

Clara.

Nay, not now.

The dew's are falling, and the night draws nigh.
 Some other time.

Festus.

Why, now love.

Clara.

Well then, this.

These vast unearthly powers thou hast ; let me
 Assure mine own heart they be innocent.
 If thou refuse this boon I shall prejudge
 Those powers as evil ; but if harmless they,
 Thou wilt permit me share or view the means.
 I ask this, therefore, not from vain desire
 Of prying into mysteries, nor as test
 Of words of thine,—for thee believe I truly—
 But as a proof of love and harmlessness,
 To view with these same marvelling eyes of mine
 The visible form of some obedient sprite
 Or invocable angel ;—wilt thou ?

Festus.

Ay.

Wouldst parley Luniel on her silver seat,
 Or the star-tiared Ourania ? for the night
 Deepens in Heaven, and even now I see
 Earth's cardinal world-watchers each prepare
 His wing to poise for Paradisal flight,
 Relieved by darker angel.

Clara.

None of these.

For as in the sea-bound river
Flows the force of thousand rills,
So its end the great soul ever
In Eternity fulfils.

Clara. Oh! I have gazed on beauty known by none
Till now. Dizzy with light my soul. Spirit!
Thy starry name?

Spirit.

Pneumaster.

Clara.

Where dost dwell?

Spirit. I in my star abide, yet oft in Heaven.
Not where the anteformal seraphs beam,
Nor cherubim, with winged countenance, but
Where roll the bright Ophanim;—and in clouds
Of glory, wheeling through the infinite skies—
A Heaven-encircling hurricane of light—
Form with their wings a holy living throne
Of the All-hallowing Spirit, chaunting aye
God's mercy thrice victorious o'er the world—
The mysteries of wisdom—and the bliss
Of that inspiring light which Deity
Sows in the soul of Nature, stars, and men;
Blessed heirs of either world, above, beloved—
Below, accepted;—thither I attain.
For as one God, so but one nature is,
The image yet the opposite of God;
Although in infinite variousness as He,
Infinite and eternal unity;—
With these and with all holy essences,
And spirit souls elect, I mix and serve,
All with each order interpenetrant;
For humbled by the fall of Lucifer
No pride is now in Heaven; humility
Highest of virtues shewn by God the Man.
I also therefore at thy first behest,
Immortal came to do a mortal's will:
Whose sleep, all starred with dreams, tells oft of me,
And instant on mine own bright ray return.

Clara. Holy and lovely sprite, be thou with God!

Spirit. And fare thou well, too.

Festus.

Go! I do commend thee

To all good angels, maiden. They are gone,
The Heavenly and the earthly; I alone,

Like a cold column in the sunshine stand,
 Projecting darkness. Only love makes live.
 Oh! why was woman made so fair? or man
 So weak as to see that more than one had beauty?
 It is impossible to love but one.
 And yet I dare not love thee as I could;
 For all the heart most longs for and deserves
 Passes the soonest and most utterly.
 The moral of the world's great fable, life.
 All we enjoy seems given to deceive,
 Or may be, undeceive us; who cares which?
 And when the sum is done, and we have proved it,
 Why work it over and over still again?
 I am not what I would be. Hear me, God?
 And speak to me in thine invisible likeness,
 The wind, as once of yore. Let me be pure!
 Oh! I wish I was a pure child again,
 As ere the clear could trouble me: when life
 Was sweet and calm as is a sister's kiss;
 And not the wild and whirlwind touch of passion,
 Which though it hardly light upon the lip,
 With breathless swiftness sucks the soul out of sight,
 So that we lose it, and all thought of it.
 What is this life wherein Thou hast founded me,
 But a bright wheel which burns itself away,
 Benighting even night with its grim limbs,
 When it hath done and fainted into darkness?
 Flesh is but fiction, and it flies away;
 The gaunt and ghastly thing we bear about us,
 And which we hate and fear to look upon,
 Is Truth, in Death's dark likeness limned—no more.

Lucifer. Life is the one great truth, the fiction death.
 Art never satisfied, but must thou still
 Revel in bootless questings?

Festus. Lo! I speak
 To Heaven, and hell makes bold to answer me.
 If I confess me to the stars, the earth
 Rumbles her caverned threatenings at my feet;
 Or midnight clouds, low muttering in long lines
 Uncomprehended thunders, stun my ear.
 Call'st thou this power?

Lucifer.

Yon pretty little star

Shines on a vasty falsehood. Much thou hast
Of power o'er finite agencies, but none,
I tell thee, o'er the Infinite. Confess
Therefore thine own presumption, and receive
Its measures in obedience. What wouldst thou?

Festus. I sicken of this mean and shadowy nature
And shallow life.

Lucifer. Well; death is deep enough.

Festus. I have been told, and taught, and trained to pray.
I pray, and have no answer. One as well
Might wrestle with the wind. I feel, but lack
All power, as a cloud, which fears to rise,
Faints on the golden threshold of the skies;
And men suspect it as a spy of night.

Lucifer. There's reason now and then in similes.
Souls are like clouds, born of the infinite stock
Of ever formless essence, and their race
In bounteous beauty run, or ruinous storm;
Objects of love and gladness, or of ill,
And wrong, and wrath, as nature predicates;
Which having blessed or blasted in their life,
Die and rejoin the universe, to rise,
Like emanant dew on earth, in future forms
Of retributive nature; she herself
Being and doing, and enduring all.

Festus. This life is as a question, to the which
There comes no answer save an echo.

Lucifer. Hark!

Festus. Where thou art all is dumb. I would repent.
What shall be done to expiate offence?

Lucifer. To sacrifice a butterfly to the wind
Is all that can be done just now, I fear.
Thou canst not be both wise and innocent.
As well expect thy life-flood-tide to rise
Back from the baseless depths of human death.
Evil and good are primarily immixed,
Like the black lines that thwart a ray of light;
Or chequered chart of old, sun-dedicate.
Cheer up! If virtue loses, wisdom wins.

Festus. Good to extract from evil were not hard;
But to transmute all evil into good,
There is the cross of science and the crown.

Lucifer. Set clouds on fire,—go sow the sea with sand,—

Then reap your crop of foam, and harvest it.

Festus. Yet are they separable; Heaven and earth
Not more opposed in kind.

Lucifer. Bat! both are one.

Festus. The time shall come when every evil thing
From being and remembrance both shall die;
The world one solid temple of pure good.

Lucifer. Never while thou art conscious of thyself;
Never till from that shining sheaf of days
Which hangs behind Him, the Destroyer plucks
Earth's death-day, and His wrath burns white for aye.

Festus. Let all the air be lightning, the dark blue
Of ever stretching space substantial fire;
Still God is good, still tends o'er those He loves.

Lucifer. Why therefore comes no answer to thy prayer?

Festus. It may be, silence is the voice of God.

Lucifer. Assent or dissent;—whether of the twain?

SCENE.—*Anywhere.*

FESTUS and LUCIFER.

Festus. God hath refused me: wilt thou do it for me?
Or shall I end with both? remake myself?

Lucifer. Now, that is the one thing which I cannot do.
Am I not open with thee? why choose that?

Festus. Because I will it. Thou art bound to obey.

Lucifer. The world bears marks of my obedience.

Festus. My heart, like an insurgent king, no more
Brooks the accustomed tribute.

Lucifer. Well, I waive it.

Festus. Off! I am torn to pieces. Let me try
And gather up myself into a man,
As once I was. I have done with thee! Dost hear?

Lucifer. Thou canst not mean this.

Festus. Once for all—I do.

Lucifer. It is men who are deceivers—not the Devil.
The first and worst of all frauds is to cheat
Oneself. All sin is easy after that.

Festus. I feel that we must part: part now or never;
And I had rather of the two it were now.

Lucifer. This is my last walk through my favourite world:
And I had hoped to have enjoyed it with thee.
For thee I quitted hell; for thee I warped
And shrivelled up my soul into a man:
For thee I shed my shining wings; for thee
Put on this mask of flesh, this mockery
Of motion, and this seeming shape like thine.
And by my woe, I swear that were I now,
For thy false heart, to give my spirit spring,
I would scatter soul and body both to hell,
And let one burn the other.

Festus. If thou darest!
Lift but the finger of a thought of ill
Against me, and—thou durst not. Mark, we part.

Lucifer. Well; as thou wilt. Remember that thy heart
Will shed its pleasures as thine eye its tears;
And both leave loathsome furrows.

Festus. Thinkest thou
That I will have no pleasures without thee,
Who marrest all thou makest, and even more?

Lucifer. Thou canst not: save indeed some poor trite
thing
Called moderation, every one can have;
And modesty, God knows, is suffering.

Festus. Now will I prove thee liar for that word;
And that the very vastest out of hell.
With perfect condemnation I abjure
My soul; my nature doth abhor itself;
Hence! let me pass. I have a soul to spare!

Lucifer. A hundred I. He's gone. It matters not.
I have him yet; for he is mine to tempt.
Gold hath the hue of hell flames: but for him
I will lay some brilliant and delicious lure,
Which shall be worth perdition to a seraph.
Most men glide quietly and deeply down:
Some seek the bottom like a cataract.
Now he shall find it, seek it how he will.
None ever went without once taking breath.
It is passion plunges men into mine arms;
But it matters not; hell burns before them all.

It is by hell-light they do their chiefest deeds ;
And by hell-light they shine unto each other ;
And hell through life's thick fog glares red and round ;
And but for hell they would grope in utter dark.

SCENE—*The Surface.*

LUCIFER and FESTUS.

Lucifer. Wilt ride ?

Festus. I'll have an hour's ride.

Lucifer. Be mine the steeds ; be me the guide ;—
Come hither, come hither,
My brave black steed ;
And thou, too, his fellow,
Hither with speed ;
Though not so fleet
As the steeds of Death,
Your feet are as sure,
Ye have longer breath.
Ye have drawn the world
Without wind or bait,
Six thousand years,
And it waxeth late ;
So take me this once,
And again to my home,
And rest ye and feast ye.
They come, they come.

Festus. Tossing their manes like
Pitchy or snowy surge ; and lashing
Their tails into a
Tempest ; their eyes flashing,
Like shooting thunderbolts.

Lucifer. Come, know your masters, colts !
Choose !

Festus. The white one.

Lucifer. Be it so.

Mourning suits me best, we know.

Up, and away !

Festus. Hurrah ! hurrah !

The noblest pace the world e'er saw.
I swear by Heaven we'll beat the sun,

In the longest heat that ever was run ;
If we keep it up as we have begun.

Lucifer. I told thee my steeds
Were a gallant pair.

Festus. And they were not thine,
They might be divine.

Lucifer. Thine is named Ruin ;
And Darkness mine.

Festus. Like all of thy deeds,
Now that's unfair.

Lucifer. A civiller and gentler beast
Thou hast never crossed at least.
Now, look around !

Festus. Why, this is France.
Nature is here like a living romance.
Look at its vines, and streams, and skies,
Its glancing feet and dancing eyes !

Lucifer. 'Tis a strange nation, light yet strong ;
Fierce of heart and blithe of tongue ;
Prone to change ; so fond of blood
She wounds herself to quaff her own.

Festus. Oh ! it's a brave and lovely land ;
And well deserving every good
Which others wish themselves alone,
Could she but herself command.

Lucifer. On ! on ! no more delay
Or we'll not ride round
The world all day.

Festus. Good horse, get off the ground !

Lucifer. Sit firm ! and if our horses please,
We will take at once the Pyrenees.
'Twas bravely leapt !

Festus. Ay, this is Spain :
Europe's last land
'Twill e'er remain ;
Last in the progress of the earth ;
The last in liberty ;
The last in wealth and worth ;
The last in bigotry.

Lucifer. Turn thy steed, and slacken rein ;
Quick ! we must be back again ;
O'er the vale hid in the mountain

O'er the merry forest fountain ;
 Ruin and Darkness ! we must fly
 O'er crag and rift,
 Swift—swift—swift
 As the glance of an eye.

Festus. That is Italy—the grave
 And resurrection of the slave.

Lucifer. And there lies Greece, whose soul
 Men say hath fled :

Festus. Perhaps some God may come,
 And raise the dead.

Lucifer. Norward now we'll hold our course.
 Thine I think is the bolder horse ;
 But bear him up with a harder hand ;
 Rough riding this o'er Swisserland.

Festus. So all have found it who have tried ;
 High as their Alps the people's pride,
 Never to have bowed before
 The tyrant or the conqueror.

Lucifer. Away, away ! before thee lie
 The fields and floods of Germany.

Festus. Well I love thee, Father-land ;
 Sire of Europe, as thou art ;
 Be free ; and crouch no more, but stand ;
 Thy noblest son will take thy part.
 Oh ! sooner let the mountains bend
 Beneath the clouds, when tempests lower,
 Than nations stoop their sky-compeering heads
 In homage to some petty despot's power ;
 The worm which suffers mincing into parts
 May sprout forth heads and tails, but grows no hearts.

Lucifer. There lies Austria ! Famous land
 For fiddlesticks and sword-in-hand.

Festus. And Poland, whom, truly unhappy we call !
 Unworthy to rise—unwilling to fall.
 Forge into swords thy feudal chain ;
 Smite e'en the souls of foes in twain ;
 The shackles have been bound in vain
 Round England's arms : and we are free
 As the souls of our sires in Heaven which be.
 That earth should have so few
 Men, Fathers, like to you !

Lucifer. What matter who be free or slaves?
For all there is one tyranny, the grave's;
Or freedom, may be. On! on! haste!

Festus. What land is yonder wide, white waste?

Lucifer. Ha! 'tis Russia's gentle realm:
Whose sceptre is the sword—whose crown, the helm.

Festus. I swear by every atom which exists,
I better love this reckless ride
O'er hill and forest, lake and river wide;
O'er sunlit plain and through the mountain mists,
Than aught which thou hast given beside.

Lucifer. See what a long long track
Of dust and fire behind,
For miles and miles aback!
And shrill and strong,
As we shoot along,
Whistles, and whirrs,
Like a forest of firs
Falling, the cold north wind.

Festus. Look! my way I can only read
By the sparks from the hoof of my giant steed.

Lucifer. Where art thou now?

Festus. In Tartar land
I know by the deserts of salt and sand.
Nor aim nor end hath a wandering life;
Rest reaps but rest, and strife but strife.
With the nations round
They ne'er have mixed;
For good or for ill
They stand all still;
Their bodies but rove,
Their minds are fixed.
And yonder lies old China's wall,
Where gods of gold do men enthrall:
Gods whose gold's their only worth.

Lucifer. Well, is not gold the god of earth?
Now southward, hey! for Hindostan!
The sun beats down both beast and man.
Insect and herb for life do gasp;
The river reeks, and faints the asp.

Festus. But blithe are we,
And our steeds, I trow;

And the mane of mine
Yet bears the snow
Which fell on us
By Caucasus.
By the four beasts ! but this is warm.

Lucifer. Away ! away !
Nor stint nor stay ;
We'll reach the sea before yon storm.

Festus. Wilt take the sea ?

Lucifer. Ay, that will we !
And swim as we ride,
Our steeds astride ;
Come, leap, leap off with me !

Festus. What ? shall we leap
Sheer off this steep,
A mile the sea above ?

Lucifer. Leap as to save
From worse than a grave
The maid thou most dost love !

Festus. There is a rapture in the headlong leap,
The wedgelike cleaving of the closing deep !
A feeling full of hardihood and power
With which we court the waters that devour.
Oh ! 'tis a feeling great, sublime, supreme,
Like the ecstatic influence of a dream,
To speed one's way thus o'er the sliding plain ;
And make a kindred being with the main.

Lucifer. By Chaos ! this is gallant sport ;
A league at every breath ;
Methinks if I ever have to die,
I'll ride this rate to death.

Festus. Away, away upon the whitening tide,
Like lover hastening to embrace his bride,
We hurry faster than the foam we ride.
Dashing aside the waves which round us cling,
With strength like that which lifts an eagle's wing
Where the stars dazzle and the angels sing.

Lucifer. We scatter the spray,
And break through the billows,
As the wind makes way
Through the leaves of willows.

Festus. In vain they urge their armies to the fight :

Their surge-crests crumble 'neath our stroke of might.
 We meet, and fear not—mount; now rise, now fall—
 And dare, with fullnerved arm, the rage of all.
 Through anger-swollen wave, or sparkling spray,
 Nothing it recks; we hold our perilous way
 Right onward! till we feel the whirling brain
 Ring with the maddening music of the main;
 Till the fixed eyeball strives and strains to ken,
 Yet loathes to see the shore and haunts of men;
 And the blood, half starting through each ridgy vein,
 In the unwieldy hand sets black with pain.
 Then let the tempest cloud on cloud come spread,
 And tear the stormy terrors of his head;
 Let the wild sea-bird wheel around my brow,
 And shriek—and swoop—and flap her wing as now
 It gladdens. On, ye boisterous billows, roll,
 And keep my body; ye have ta'en my soul.
 Thou element! the type which God hath given,
 For eyes and hearts too earthy, of His heaven;
 Were Heaven a mockery, I would never mourn
 While o'er thy bosom I might still be borne;
 While yet to me the power and joy were given
 To fling my breast on thine, and mingle earth with
 Heaven.

Lucifer. See yonder! now we quit the main;
 For here's the Cape, here's land again,—
 And scour we must o'er Afric's plain.

Festus. Away, away! on either hand
 Nor town nor tower,
 Nor shade nor shower—
 Nothing but sun and sand.

Lucifer. See, there they are! I knew, right soon,
 We would light on the mountains of the moon.
 Over them! over! nought forbids.

Festus. Yonder the Nile and the Pyramids?
 Hurrah! By my soul!
 At every bound
 I see, I feel

The' earth rush round.
 I see the mountains slide away—
 That side night, and this side day.

Lucifer. Shall we go to America?

Festus. Why, have we time ?

Lucifer. Oh, plenty ;

Be there, too, ere we reckon twenty.

Another run, another bound ;

And we shall leave this lion ground.

Festus. The sea again, the swift bright sea !

Lucifer. Hold hard, and follow me.

Well, now we have travelled upon the waves,

Wilt travel a time beneath ?

And visit the sea-born in their caves ;

And look on the rainbow-tinted wreath

Of weeds, beset with pearls, wherewith

The mermaid binds her long green hair,

Or rouse the sea-snake from his lair ?

Festus. Ay, ay ! down let us dive.

Lucifer. Look up ! we lack not stars ;

And every star thou seest's alive :

A little globe of life—light—love,

Whose every atom is a living being ;

Each the other's bosom seeing,

Each enlightening the other.

Festus. Oh ! how unlike the world above,

Where each doth mainly, vainly strive

To dim or to outshine his brother !

Lucifer. Come on ! come on !

Festus. Are those bright spars,

Or eyes of things which ne'er forgive,

That seem to play on us, and glare

With rage that we so far should dare

To search the hidden deeps,

Where tide, the moonslave, sleeps ?

Where the wind breathes not, and the wave

Walks softly, as above a grave ;

Where coral worms, in countless nations,

Build rocks up from the sea's foundations ;

Where the islands strike their roots

Far from the old mainland ;

And spring like desert-fruits,

Shook off by God's strong hand,

Up from their bed of sand.

Look, listen ! there is music in the cave,

Where Ocean sleeps, and brightness in the wave

The sea-bird makes its pillow, and the star,
 Last born of Heaven, its azure mirror ;—far
 And wide, the pale, fine fire of ocean flows,
 Softly sublime, like lightnings in repose—
 Till roused anon, afar its flaming spray it throws.

Lucifer. There ! now we stand
 On the world's-end-land !
 Over the hills

Away we go !
 Through fire, and snow,
 And rivers, whereto
 All others are rills.

Festus. Through the lands of silver,
 The lands of gold ;
 Through lands untrodden,
 And lands untold.

Lucifer. By strait and bay
 We must away :
 Through swamp and plain,
 And hurricane ;

Festus. And that dark cloud of slaves
 Which yet may rise ;
 Though nought shall blot the-bannered stars
 From Freedom's skies.

America ! half-brother of the world !
 With something good and bad of every land ;
 Greater than thee have lost their seat—
 Greater scarce none can stand.
 Thy flag now flouts the skies,
 The highest under Heaven ;
 Save the red cross, whereto are given
 All victories.

Lucifer. Our horses snort, and snuff the sea,
 And pant for where we ought to be.

Festus. Well, here we are ; and as we flew in,
 I said, let Darkness follow Ruin !

Lucifer. 'Twas right. Spur on ! Come, Darkness, come,
 Think of thy well-strown stall.

Festus. For me, I care not what's to come,
 Nor for the fate by which I fall ;
 But I would that I were Ocean's son,
 The solitary brave,

Like yon sea-snake, to climb upon
 The crest of the bounding wave.
 Oh ! happy, if at last I lie,
 Within some pearled and coral cave ;
 While over head the booming surge
 And moaning billow shall chant my dirge ;
 And the storm blast, as it sweepeth by,
 Shall, answering, howl to the mermaid's sigh,
 And the nightwind's mournful minstrelsy,
 Their requiem over my grave.

Lucifer. Through morn and midnight, sunset and high
 noon,

One hour hath ta'en us ;—o'er all land and sea,
 O'er opening earthquake and iceberg have we
 Swept in swift safety. 'Twill be over soon.
 Behold the common, narrow sea,
 Which, like a strong man's arm,
 Keeps back two foes whose lips are white,
 Whose hearts with rage are warm.

Festus. England ! my country, great and free !
 Heart of the world, I leap to thee.
 How shall my country fight
 When her foes rise against her ?
 But with thine arm, O Sea !
 The arm which thou lent'st her ?
 Where shall my country be buried
 When she shall die ?
 Earth is too scant for her grave :
 Where shall she lie ?
 She hath brethren more than a hundred,
 And they all want room ;
 They may die and may lie where they live—
 They shall not mix with her doom.
 Where but within thine arms,
 O sea, O sea ?
 Wherein she hath lived and gloried,
 Let her rest be !
 We will rise and say to the sea,
 Flow over her !
 We will cry to the death of the deep,
 Cover her !
 The world hath drawn his sword,

And his red shield drips before him :—
 But my country rise !
 Thou canst never die
 While a foe hath life to fly ;
 Rise land, and gore him !

Lucifer. Now get on land, and hie along
 O'er forest, copse, and glade ;
 We have but a league or two more to go
 Before our journey's made ;
 With speed that flings the sun into the shade.

Festus. See the gold sunshine patching,
 And streaming and streaking across
 The gray-green oaks ; and catching,
 By its soft brown beard, the moss.

Lucifer. Ah ! here we get an open plain :
 Here we'll get down.

Away, good steeds ! be off again !

Festus. We must be near to Town.
 I am bound to thee for ever
 By the pleasure of this day ;
 Henceforth we will never sever,
 Come what come may.

SCENE—A Village Feast. Evening.

FESTUS, LUCIFER, and OTHERS.

Festus. It is getting dark. One has to walk quite close,
 To see the pretty faces that we meet.

Lucifer. A disagreeable necessity,
 Truly.

Festus. We'll rest upon this bridge. I am tired.
 Yon tall slim tree ! does it not seem as made
 For its place there, a kind of natural maypole ?
 Beyond, the lighted stalls stored with the good
 Things of our childhood's world, and behind them,
 The shouting showman and the clashing cymbal ;
 The open-doored cottages and blazing hearths ;
 The little ones running up with naked feet,
 And cake in either hand, to their mother's lap ;
 Old and young laughing ; schoolboys with their play-
 things ;

Clowns cracking jokes, and lasses with sly eyes,
 And the smile settling in their sunflecked cheeks,
 Like noon upon the mellow apricot ;—
 Make up a scene I can for once give in to.
 It must please all, the social and the selfish.
 Are they not happy ?

Lucifer.

Why, it matters not.

They seem so : that's enough.

Festus.

But not the same.

Lucifer. Yet truth and falsehood meet in seeming, like
 The falling leaf and shadow on the pool's face.
 And these are joys, like beauty, but skin deep.

Festus. Remove all such, and what's the joy of earth ?
 It is they create the appetite of life—
 Give zest and relish to the lot of millions.
 And take the taste for them away—what's left ?
 A dry ungainly skeleton of soul.

Lucifer. Power is aye above the soul, and joy
 Below it. Pleasure men prefer to power.

(*Children at Play.*)

Festus. Play away, good ones ! I could romp with you
 To look upon the fair face of a child
 Feels like a resurrection of the heart.
 Children are vast in blessings ; Kings and Queens
 According to the dynasties of Love.
 The might and the delight of nations lies
 In them, and for them earth is what it is.

Lucifer. Another row of dragon's teeth ! a row
 Of grinders, look ye.

An Old Man.

Pity the poor blind man !

Festus. Here is substantial pity.

Old Man.

Heaven reward you

Festus. Blind as the blue skies after sunset. Blind !
 And I am tired of looking on what is.
 One might as well see beauty never more,
 As look upon it with an empty eye.
 I would this world were over. I am tired.
 Nought happens but what happens to one's self ;
 And all hath happened I have wished, and more.
 Our pleasures all pass from us, one by one,
 With that relief which sighing gives the heart,

Though each sigh leaves it lower. It is sad
 To think how few our pleasures really are ;
 And for the which we risk eternal good.
 There's nothing that can satisfy one's self,
 Except one's self. Well, it is very sad.
 And by the time we come of age we have felt,
 In one degree or other, all that age
 Can offer. We have reaped our field ere noon.
 The rest is reproduction ; sowing—reaping—
 Losing again, Toil and gain tire alike.
 We cannot live too slowly to be good
 And happy, nor too much by line and square.
 But youth is burning to forestall its nature,
 And will not wait for Time to ferry it
 Over the stream, but flings itself into
 The flood, and perishes. And yet, why not ?
 There is no charm in time as time, nor good.
 The long days are no happier than the short ones.
 'Tis sometime now since I was here. We leave
 Our home in youth—no matter to what end :—
 Study—or strife—or pleasure, or what not ;
 And coming back in few short years, we find
 All as we left it, outside ; the old elms,
 The house, grass, gates, and latchet's self same click ;
 But lift that latchet,—all is changed as doom :
 The servants have forgotten our step, and more
 Than half of those who knew us know us not.
 Adversity, prosperity, the grave,
 Play a round game with friends. On some the world
 Hath shot its evil eye, and they are passed
 From honour and remembrance, and a stare
 Is all the mention of their names receives ;
 And people know no more of them than of
 The shapes of clouds at midnight, a year back.

Lucifer. Let us move on to where the dancing is ;
 We soon shall see how happy they all are.
 Here is a loving couple quarrelling,
 And there, another. It is quite distressing.
 See yonder. Two men fighting !

Festus.

What avail

These vile exceptions to the rule of joy ?

Lucifer. Behold the happiness of which thou spakest !

The highest hills are miles below the sky ;
 And so far is the lightest heart below
 True happiness.

Festus. This is a snakelike world,
 And always has its tail within its mouth,
 As if it ate itself, and moralled time.
 The world is like yon children's merry-go-round ;
 What men admire are carriages and hobbies,
 Which the exalted manikins enjoy.
 There is a noisy ragged crowd below
 Of urchins drives it round, who only get
 The excitement for their pains—best gain perhaps :
 For it is not they who labour that grow dizzy
 Nor sick—that's for the idle proud above,
 Who soon dismount, more weary of enjoying
 Than those below of working ; and but fair.
 It is wretchedness or recklessness alone
 Keeps us alive. Were we happy we should die.
 Yet what is death ? I like to think on death :
 It is but the appearance of an apparition.
 One ought to tremble ; but oughts stand for nothing.
 I hate the thought of wrinkling up to rest ;
 The toothlike aching ruin of the body,
 With the heart all out, and nothing left but edge.
 Give me the long high bounding feel of life,
 Which cries, let me but leap into my grave,
 And I'll not mind the when nor where. We never
 Care less for life than when enjoying it.
 Oh ! I should love to die. What is to die ?
 I cannot hold the meaning more than can
 An oak's arms clasp the blast that blows on it.
 There is an air-like something which must be,
 And yet not to be seen, nor to be touched.
 I am made up to die ; for having been
 Every thing, there is nothing left but nothing
 To be again.

Lucifer. Hark ! here's a ballad-singer.

Ballad-Singer. All of my own composing !

Festus. Yes, yes—we know.

SINGER. My gipsy maid ! my gipsy maid !
 I bless and curse the day
 I lost the light of life, and caught

The grief which maketh gray.
Would that the light which blinded me
Had saved me on my way!

My night-haired love! so sweet she was,
So fair and blithe was she;
Her smile was brighter than the moon's,
Her eyes the stars might see.

I met her by her lane-spread tent,
Beside a moss-green stone,
And bade her make, not mock, my fate;
My fortune was her own.
Thou art but yet a boy, she said,
And I a woman grown.

I am a man in love, I cried:
My heart was early manned:
She smiled, and only drooped her eyes,
And then let go my hand.
We stood a minute; neither spake
What each must understand.

I told her, so she would be mine,
And follow where I went,
She straight should have a bridal bower
Instead of gipsy tent.

Or would she have me wend with her,
The world between should fall;
For her I would fling up faith and friends,
And name, and fame, and all.

Her smile so bright froze while I spake,
And ice was in her eye;
So near, it seemed ere touch her heart
I might have kissed the sky.

I said that if she loved to rule,
Or if she longed to reign,
I would make her Queen of every race
Which tearlike trode the world's sad face,
Or bleed at every vein.

She laid her finger on her lip,
And pointed to the sky;
There is no God to come, she said:
Dost thou not fear to die?

And what is God, I said, to thee?
Thy people worship not.
The good, the happy, and the free,
She said, they need no God.

I looked until I lost mine eyes ;
I felt as though I were
In a dark cave, with one weak light—
The light of life—with her ;
And that was wasting fast away ;
I watched, but would not stir.

Again she took my hand in hers,
And read it o'er and o'er ;
Ah ! eyes so young, so sweet, I said,
Make as they read love's lore.

She held my hand—I trembled whilst—
For sorely soon I felt
She made the love-cross she foretold,
And all the woe she dealt.

Unhappy I should be, she said,
And young to death be given :
I told her I believed in her,
Not in the stars of Heaven.

Hush ! we breathe Heaven, she said, and bowed ;
And the stars speak through me.
Let Heaven, I cried, take care of Heaven !
I only care for thee.

She shrank ; I looked, and begged a kiss ;
I knew she had one for me ;
She would deny me none, she said,
But give me none would she.

My gipsy maid ! my gipsy maid !
'Tis three long years like this,
Since there I gave and got from thee
That meeting, parting kiss.

I saw the tears start in her eye,
And trickle down her cheek ;
Like falling stars across the sky,
Escaping from their Maker's eye :
I saw, but spared to speak.

Go, and forget ! she said, and slid
Below her lowly tent ;
I will not, cannot ;—hear me, girl !
She heard not, and I went.

At eve, by sunset, I was there,
The tent was there no more ;
The fire which warmed her flickered still—
The fire she sat before.

I stood by it, till through the dark
 I saw not where it lay ;
 And then like that my heart went out
 In ashy grief and gray.

My gipsy maid ! my gipsy maid !
 Oh ! let me bless this day ;
 This day it was I met thee first,
 And yet it shall be and is cursed,
 For thou hast gone away.

Lucifer. Another, please—not quite so gloomy, friend.

Girl. I wonder if the tale it tells be true.

Singer. I dare say—but you want a merrier.

Every man's life hath its apocrypha ;
 Mine has, at least. I have said more than need be.
 It happened, too, when I was very young.
 We never meet such gipsies when we are old ;
 And yet we more complain of youth than age.
 Now, make a ring, good people. Let me breathe !

[*Sings.*

Oh ! the wee green neuk, the sly green neuk,
 The wee sly neuk for me !
 Whare the wheat is wavin' bright and brown,
 And the wind is fresh and free.
 Whare I weave wild weeds, and out o' reeds
 Kerve whistles as I lay ;
 And a douce low voice is murmurin' by
 Through the lee-lang simmer day.
 Oh ! the wee green neuk, &c,

And where a' things luik as though they lo'ed
 To languish in the sun ;
 And that if they feed the fire they dree,
 They wadna ae pang were gone.
 Whare the lift aboon is still as death,
 And bright as life can be ;
 While the douce low voice says, na, na, na !
 But ye mauna luik sae at me.
 Oh ! the wee green neuk, &c.

Whare the lang rank bent is saft and cule.
 And freshenin' till the feet ;
 And the spot is sly, and the spinnie high,
 Whare my luvie and I mak seat :
 And I teaze her till she rins, and then
 I catch her roun' the tree ;
 While the poppies shak' their heids and blush :
 Let 'em blush till they drap for me !
 Oh ! the wee green neuk, &c.

Festus. And all who know such feelings and such scenes

Will, I am sure, reward you. Here—take this.

Others. And this, and this—too!

Singer. Thank ye all, good friends!

Festus. There's much that has no merit but its truth,
And no excuse but nature. Nature does
Never wrong: it is society which sins.
Look at the bee upon the wing among flowers;
How brave, how bright his life. Then mark him hived,
Cramped, cringing in his self-built social cell.
Thus is it in the world-hive: most where men
Lie deep in cities as in drifts—death drifts;
Nosing each other like a flock of sheep;
Not knowing and not caring whence nor whither
They come or go, so that they fool together.

Lucifer. It is quite fair to halve these lives, and say
This life is nature's, that society's,
When both are side-views only of one thing.

Farmer. I am glad to see you come among us sir.

Parson. Why, I have but little comfort in these
pastimes;
And any heart, turned Godwards, feels more joy
In one short hour of prayer, than e'er was raised
By all the feasts on earth since their foundation.
But no one will believe us; as if we
Had never known the vain things of the world,
Nor lain and slept in sin's seducing shade,
Listless, until God woke us; made us feel
We should be up and stirring in the sun;
For everything had to be done ere night.
What is all this joy and jollity about?
Grant there may be no sin. What good is it?

Farmer. I can't defend these feasts, sir, and can't
blame.

Parson. Good evening, friends! Why, Festus! I
rejoice

We meet again. I have a young friend here,
A student—who hath stayed with us of late.
You would be glad I know to know each other;
Therefore be known so.

Festus. You are a student, sir.

Student. I profess little. But it is a title
A man may claim perhaps with modesty.

Festus. True. All mankind are students. How to
live

And how to die forms the great lesson still.
I know what study is: it is to toil
Hard, through the hours of the sad midnight watch,
At tasks which seem a systematic curse,
And course of bootless penance. Night by night,
To trace one's thought as if on iron leaves;
And sorrowful as though it were the mode
And date of death we wrote on our own tombs:
Wring a slight sleep out of the couch, and see
The self-same moon which lit us to our rest,
Her place scarce changed perceptibly in Heaven,
Now light us to renewal of our toils.
This, to the young mind, wild and all in leaf,
Which knowledge grafting paineth. Fruit soon comes,
And more than all our troubles pays us powers;
So that we joy to have endured so much:
That not for nothing have we slaved and slain
Ourselves almost. And more; it is to strive
To bring the mind up to one's own esteem:
Who but the generous fail? It is to think,
While thought is standing thick upon the brain
As dew upon the brow—for thought is brain-sweat—
And gathering quick and dark, like storms in summer,
Until convulsed, condensed, in lightning sport,
It play upon the heavens of the mind,—
Opens the hemisphered abysses here,
And we become revealers to ourselves.

Student. When night hath set her silver lamp on high,
Then is the time for study: when Heaven's light
Pours itself on the page, like prophecy
On time, unglooming all its mighty meanings;
It is then we feel the sweet strength of the stars,
And magic of the moon.

Lucifer. It's a bad habit.

Student. And wisdom dwells in secret, and on high,
As do the stars. The sun's diurnal glare
Is for the daily herd; but for the wise,
The cold pure radiance of the night-born light,

Wherewith is inspiration of the truth.
There was a time when I would never go
To rest before the sun rose; and for that,
Through a like length of time as that now gone,
The world shall speak of me six thousand years hence.

Lucifer. How know you that the world won't end
to-morrow?

Parson. I now, an early riser, love to hail
The dreamy struggles of the stars with light,
And the recovering breath of earth, sleep-drowned,
Awakening to the wisdom of the sun,
And life of light within the tent of Heaven;
To kiss the feet of Morning as she walks
In dewy light along the hills, while they,
All odorous as an angel's fresh-culled crown,
Unveil to her their bounteous loveliness.

Student. I am devote to study. Worthy books
Are not companions—they are solitudes;
We lose ourselves in them and all our cares.
The further back we search the human mind,—
Mean in the mass, but in the instance great—
Which starting first with Deities, and stars,
And broods of beings earth-born, Heaven-begot,
And all the bright side of the broad world, now
Doats upon dreams and dim atomic truths,
Is all for comfort and no more for glory—
The nobler and more marvellous it shews.
Trifles like these make up the present time;
The Iliad and the Pyramids the past.

Festus. The future will have glory not the less.
I can conceive a time when the world shall be
Much better visibly, and when, as far
As social life and its relations tend,
Men, morals, manners shall be lifted up
To a pure height we know not of nor dream;
When all men's rights and duties shall be clear,
And charitably exercised and borne;
When education, conscience, and good deeds
Shall have just equal sway, and civil claims;
Great crimes shall be cast out, as were of old
Devils possessing madmen; Truth shall reign,
Nature shall be rethroned, and man sublimed.

Student. Oh! then may Heaven come down again to earth;

And dwell with her, as once, like to a friend.

Lucifer. As like each other as a sword and scythe.
Oh! then shall lions mew and lambkins roar.

Festus. And having studied—what next?

Student.

Much I long

To view the capital city of the world.

The mountains, the great cities, and the sea,
Are each an era in the life of youth.

Festus. There to get worldly ways, and thoughts, and schemes;

To learn to detect, distrust, despise mankind—

To ken a false factitious glare amid much

That shines with seeming saintlike purity—

To gloss misdeeds—to trifle with great truths—

To pit the brain against the heart, and plead

Wit before wisdom,—these are the world's ways:

It learns us to lose that in crowds which we

Must after seek alone—our innocence;

And when the crowd is gone.

Student.

Not only that:

There all great things are round one. Interests

Mighty and mountainous of estimate,

Are daily heaped or scattered 'neath the eye.

Great deeds, great thoughts, great schemes, and crimes,
and all

Which is in purpose, or in practice great

Of human nature—there are common things.

Men make themselves be deathless as in spite;

As if they waged some lineal feud with time;

As though their fathers were immortal, too,

And immortality an every-day

Accomplishment.

Festus. Fie! fie! it is more for this:

Amid gayer people, and more wanton ways,

To give a loose to all the lists of youth—

To train your passion flowers high ahead,

And bind them on your brow as others do.

The mornlit revel and the shameless mate—

The tabled hues of darkness and of blood—

The published bosom and the crowning smile—

The cup excessive; and if aught there be
 More vain than these or wanton—that to have—
 Have all but always in intent, effect,
 Or fact. Nay, nay, deny it not: I know.
 Youth hath a strange and strong desire to try
 All feelings on the heart: it is very wrong,
 And dangerous, and deadly: strive against it!

Student. It might be some old sage was warning us.

Festus. Youth might be wise. We suffer less from
 pains
 Than pleasures.

Student. I should like to see the world,
 And gain that knowledge which is—

Festus. Barrener
 Than ice; possessing and producing nought
 But means and forms of death or vanity.
 The world is just as hollow as an eggshell.
 It is a surface, not a solid, mind:
 And all this boasted knowledge of the world
 To me seems but to mean acquaintance with
 Low things, or evil, or indifferent.

Farmer. Much more is said of knowledge than it's
 worth.

A man may gain all knowledge here, and yet
 Be, after death, as much in the dark as I.

Lucifer. What makes you know of living after death?

Farmer. Why, nothing that I know, and there it is!—
 But something I am told has told me so.
 No angel ever came to me to prove it;
 And all my friends have died and left no ghosts.

Festus. All that is good a man may learn from himself;
 And much, too, that is bad.

Parson. Nay, let me speak!
 Aught that is good the soul receives of God
 When He hath made it His; and until then
 Man cannot know, nor do, nor be, aught good.
 Oh! there is nought on earth worth being known
 But God and our own souls—the God we have
 Within our hearts; for it is not the hope,
 Nor faith, nor fear, nor notions others have
 Of God can serve us, but the sense and soul
 We have of Him within us; and, for men,

God loves us men each individually,
And deals with us in order, soul by soul.

Lucifer. But this is not the place for sermons.

Parson.

True.

We heard once, Festus, you were travelling :—
Pray in what parts ?

Festus. Among the outer orbs.

Parson. Nay, surely not so far ; except in thought,
Perchance, or calculation.

Festus. A month back

I was in giant land.

Parson. Ah ! fee-faw-fum ?—

They did not eat you there ?

Festus. Oh ! no. They much

Preferred their usual fare.

Parson. What might it be ?

Not Englishmen and hasty pudding, eh ?

Festus. They are no more cannibals than you or I ;
But are of various tastes, and patronize,
I know, rich diet.

Parson. It's excusable.

And they are great consumers, I dare say.

Festus. A wheat-stack of our friend's here would but
make

One loaf of bread for them. Oak trees they use

As pickles, and tall pines as toothpicks ; whales,

In their own blubber fried, serve as mere fish

To bait their appetites. Boiled elephants

Rhinoceroses, and roasted crocodiles—

Every thing dished up whole—with lions stewed,

Shark sauce, and eagle pie, and young giraffes,

Make up a potluck dinner,—if there's plenty.

Then as for game, the ptero-dactyles

And ichthyosauri are great dainties there,

Coming in season only once an age.

They reckon there by ages, not by years.

Student. And as to beverage ?

Festus.

Oh ; if thirsty, they

Will lay them down and drink a river dry,

Nor once draw breath.

Parson.

Ah ! camel, gnat, and all.

Festus. Others are more abstemious, and consume

Egg-broth and simples chiefly. There was one
 Who when I saw him first sat by a fire :
 An egg, an hour-glass, and a water bowl
 Being before him. All he said was this :—

When the sand is run

The egg is done.

This he first boiled, then roasted, and then ate.

Student. What sort of one? Perhaps an ostrich egg?

Festus. Much larger. Here is nothing of the kind.

The yolk was like the sun seen in a fog ;

The white was thin and clouded, and the shell

Heavy and hard as is our earth-pie crust.

Lucifer. What kind of bird it was that laid it—
 guess !—

Parson. Continue. You have travelled in the dark ;
 But wisdom sometimes inns with ignorance.

What of their persons, habits, language, creed ?

Festus. Huger than Napheleim of old, whose bulk
 Cast cloudlike shadows on the eclipséd earth ;
 Huger than those our childhood's chap-books brand ;
 Or all whose deeds till now defile romance ;
 Albadan and those monstrous, sire and son,
 Whom Amadis, the flower of knights, o'erthrew,
 Not counting much of giants—so to win
 His Oriana bright at Miréflour ;
 In form and stature, these, as mountain-sized,
 Could walk through woods like ours as through long grass.
 They live seven thousand years of years like man's
 And then die suddenly ; when death takes place
 They burn the bodies always in a lake,
 The spray whereof is ashes, and its depths
 Unfathomable fire ; and never mourn.
 Use little verbal language, but express
 All thought by action and oracular use
 Of eye or hand. Their chief religion seems
 Self punishment by sin and rites of fire.
 'Twould do the godless good to visit once
 One of this awful race whom late I saw ;
 And who—were time and place more fitting—

Student.

Nay,

We are apart from others. Nothing save
 Yon heavenly ark which floats among the stars,

Now resting on an Ararat of clouds,
Hath leave to overlook us.

Parson.

Pray proceed.

Festus. Once I had travelled through a weary world,
Than all in Heaven more barren and forlorn,
Dark as the wild heart of a thunder-cloud,
Strewn with the wrecks and ashes of all orbs
Firestranded, rolling in quick agony;
Peopled with burning ghosts dislimbed and charred;
And in the midst a giant, by a fire
Kindled of burning passions, and full fed
With sins long seasoned, at whose feet there stood
A crystal cistern brimmed with human tears,
Which sprinkled but inflamed the fire withal;—
The giant all while watching with stern mien,
And ruthless interest the whole. Dread sir!
Said I, as I drew near, what angers thee?
He answered not, but pointed; and I saw
Full in the midst of that infernal fire,
Blazing aghast in solar solitude,
A panting shadow, which with skeleton eyes,
And woe-gouged countenance, whereon was hung
A white eclipse like darkness pale with pain,
Watched for the disappearance of the Heavens
With a despairing hope: entranced it lay
In all its horrid perspicuity,
And glassy ghastliness immortalized.
Anon it turned round restlessly, and cried
Woe, woe is me! Eternal Spirit God!
Thy wrath is heaviest when endurable.
Put forth Thy strength and sweep the universe,
With me, into the night of nothingness,
That sin and soul may perish. Woe is me!
Still shine the blessed Heavens, and still, like fire
Congealed, my woe perpetuates itself.
Whereat the giant laughed, rejoicing in
His ministry of woe, and blew his hell
Still fiercer—till it bellowed, and the orb
Beneath my foot sole seared, and I took leave;
For there was somewhat in the giant's air,
And his huge balefire, and the naked plain—
Bald as the crown of Time—which caused me dread.

Parson. Dreams you have dreamed till you believe in them ;
 But such as these are awesome. Not the less
 View them vouchsafed as warnings. Oft the mind,
 Freed by angelic sleep from bodily bonds,
 Knows scenes and themes like these you have named,
 which tend
 To edifying much. Such travel is
 Like mine, the travail simply of the brain.

Festus. It is pure reality.

Parson. Well, say no more.
 We may pursue the sense of things too far.
 True travellers they through all the lands of life,
 Moral, emotional, or love's sunny zone ;
 The palm-graced pilgrims of truth's holy land,
 Who taking pleasure in all reason, find
 The science of supremest ultimates,
 And self-suggestive wisdom in themselves.
 So through all moral schools, the cold, stern porch,
 Divine, impassive ; garden gay, where still
 Dwelled pleasure scarce than virtue less severe ;
 And stately grove of lofty lore select ;
 The truth sought soul progresses, till we find
 Our home is where she leads ; and we are guests
 But of our guide ; the shrine she shews, herself.
 The golden side of Heaven's great shield is faith ;
 The silver, reason. I see this, you that ;
 The junction is invisible to both.

Student. One thing is sometimes said, another meant.

Lucifer. What are your politics ?

Farmer. I have none.

Lucifer. Good.

Farmer. I have my thoughts. I am no party man.
 I care for measures more than men, but think
 Some little may depend upon the men ;
 Something in fires depends upon the grate.

First Boy. What are your colours ?

Second. Blue as Heaven.

Third. And mine

Are yellow as the sun.

First. Mine, green as grass.

Second. Green's forsaken, and yellow's forsworn ;

And blue's the colour that shall be worn.

Student. As to religion, politics, law, and war,
But little need be said. All are required,
And all are well enough. Of liberty,
And slavery, and tyranny we hear
Much; but the human mind affects extremes.
The heart is in the middle of the system;
And all affections gather round the truth,
The moderated joys and woes of life.
I love my God, my country, kind and kin;
Nor would I see a dog wronged of his bone.
My country! if a wretch should e'er arise,
Out of thy countless sons, who would curtail
Thy freedom, dim thy glory,—while he lives
May all earth's peoples curse him—for of all
Hast thou secured the blessing;—and if one
Exist who would not arm for liberty,
Be he too curséd living; and when dead
Let him be buried downwards, with his face
Looking to hell, and o'er his coward grave
The hare skulk in her form.

Lucifer. Nay, gently, friend.
Curse nothing, not the Devil. He's beside you—
For aught you know.

Student. I neither know nor care.
(*They pass some card-players.*)

Festus. Kings, queens, knaves, tens, would trick the
world away,
And it were not now and then for some brave ace.

Student. You see yon wretched starved old man; his
brow
Grooved out with wrinkles like the brown dry sand
The tide of life is leaving?

Lucifer. Yes I see him.

Student. Last week he thought he was about to die:
So he bade gold be strewn beneath his pillow,
Gold on a chest that he might lie and see,
And gold put in a basin on his bed,
That he might dabble with his fingers in.
He's going now to grope for pence or pins.
He never gave a pin's worth in his life.
What would you do to him?

Lucifer. I would have him wrought
 Into a living wire, which beaten out,
 Might make a golden network for the world ;
 Then melt him inch by inch, and hell by hell,
 Where is the law of wrath.

Student. Oh, charity !
 It is a thought the Devil might be proud of—
 Once and away. Misers and spendthrifts may
 Torment each other in the world to come.

Lucifer. And thus do men apportion their own lot ;
 A grain of comfort and a sack of sin.

Festus. Men look on death as lightning, always far
 Off, or in Heaven. They know not it is in
 Themselves, a strong and inward tendency,
 The soul of every atom, every hair :
 That nature's infinite electric life :
 Escaping from each isolated frame,
 Up out of earth, or down from Heaven, becomes
 To each its proper death, and adds itself
 Thus to the great reunion of the whole.
 There is a man in mourning ! What does he here ?

Student. He has just buried the only friend he had,
 And now comes hither to enjoy himself.

Festus. Why will we dedicate the dead to God,
 And not ourselves the living ? Oft we speak,
 With tears of joy and trust, of some dear friend
 As surely up in Heaven ; while that same soul,
 For aught we know, may be shuddering even in hell
 To hear his name named ; or there may be no
 Soul in the case—and the fat icy worm,
 Give him a tongue, can tell us all about him.

Student. Here is music. Stay. That simple melody
 Comes on the heart like infant innocence—
 Pure feeling pure ; while yet the new-bodied soul
 Is swinging to the motion of the Heavens,
 And scarce hath caught, as yet, earth's backening course.

Festus. The heart is formed as earth was—its first age
 Formless and void, and fit but for itself ;
 Then feelings half alive, just organized,
 Come next,—then creeping sports and purposes,—
 Then animal desires, delights, and loves—
 For love is the first and granite-like effect

Of things—the longest and the highest: next
 The wild and winged desires, youth's saurian schemes,
 Which creep and fly by turns; which kill and eat,
 And do disgorge each other; comes at length
 The mould of perfect matchless manhood—then
 Woman divides the heart, and multiplies it.

The insipidity of innocence

Palls: it is guilty, happy, and undone.

A death is laid upon it, and it goes—

Quits its green Eden for the sandy world,

Where it works out its nature, as it may,

In sweat, smiles, blood, tears, cursings, and what not.

And giant sins possess it; and it worships

Works of the hand, head, heart—its own or others—

A creature worship, which excludeth God's:

The less thrusts out the greater. Warning comes,

But the heart fears not—feels not; till at last

Down comes the flood from Heaven; and that heart,

Broken inwards, earthlike, to its central hell:

Or like the bright and burning eye we see

Inly, when pressed hard backwards on the brain,

Ends and begins again—destroyed, is saved.

Every man is the first man to himself,

And Eves are just as plentiful as apples;

Nor do we fall, nor are we saved by proxy.

The Eden we live in is our own heart;

And the first thing we do, of our free choice,

Is sure and necessary to be sin.

Each to himself is also the last man,

And with him bears and earns the world's vast doom.

Lucifer. The only right men have is to be damned.

What is the good of music, or the beauty?

Music tells no truths.

Festus.

True; but it suggests

And illustrates the highest of all truths,

The harmony of all things—even earth,

With its great Author. Oh! there is nought so sweet

As lying and listening music from the hands,

And singing from the lips, of one we love—

Lips that all others should be tuned to. Then

The world would all be love and song; Heaven's harps

And orbs join in; the whole be harmony—

Distinct, yet blended—blending all in one
 Long and delicious tremble like a chord.
 But to Thee, God! all Being is a harp
 Whereon Thou makest mightiest melody.
 Hast ever been in love?

Student. I never was.

Festus. Spite of morality or mystery,
 It is love which mostly destines our life.
 What makes the world in after life I know not,
 For our horizon alters as we age :
 Power only can make up for the lack of love—
 Power of some sort. The mind at one time grows
 So fast, it fails; and then its stretch is more
 Than its strength; but, as it opes, love fills it up,
 Like to the stamen in the flower of life,
 Till for the time we well-nigh grow all love;
 And soon we feel the want of one kind heart
 To love what's well, and to forgive what's ill,
 In us,—that heart we play for at all risks.

Student. How can the heart, which lies embodied deep,
 In blood and bone, set like a ruby eye
 Into the breast, be made a toy for beauty,
 And, vane-like, blown about by every wanton sigh?
 How can the soul, the rich star-travelled stranger,
 Who here sojourneth only for a purchase,
 Risk all the riches of his years of toil,
 And his God-vouched inheritance of Heaven,
 For one light momentary taste of love?

Festus. It is so; and when once you know the sport--
 The crowded pack of passions in full cry—
 The sweet deceits, the tempting obstacles—
 The smile, the sigh, the tear, and the embrace—
 All the delights of love at last in one,
 With kisses close as stars in the milky way,
 In at the death you cry, though 'twere your own!

Student. Upon my soul, most sound morality!
 Nothing is thought of virtue, then, nor judgment?

Festus. Oh! everything is thought of—but not then.
 And—judgment—no! it is nowhere in the field.

Student. Slow-paced and late arriving, still it comes.
 I cannot understand this love; I hear
 Of its idolatry, not its respect.

Festus. Respect is what we owe; love what we give.
 And men would mostly rather give than pay.
 Morality's the right rule for the world.
 Nor could society cohere without
 Virtue: and there are those whose spirits walk
 Abreast of angels and the future, here.
 Respect and love thou such.

Lucifer. Of course you wish
 Women to love you rather than love them.
 Well, mind! it is folly to tell women truth;
 They would rather live on lies so they be sweet.
 Never be long in one mind to one love.
 You change your practice with your subject. All
 Differ. But yet, who knows one woman well
 By heart, knows all. It is my experience;
 And I advise on good authority.

Festus. Time laughs at love. It is a hateful sight,
 That bald old grey-beard jeering the boy, Love.
 Passion is from affection; and there is nought
 So maddening and so lowering as to have
 The worse in passion. Think, when one by one,
 Pride, love, and jealousy, and fifty more
 Great feelings column up to force a heart,
 And all are beaten back—all fail—all fall:
 The tower intact; but risk it: we must learn.
 To know the world, be wise and be a fool.
 The heart will have its swing—the world its way:
 Who seeks to stop them, only throws himself down.
 We must take as we find: go as they go,
 Or stand aside. Let the world have the wall.
 How do you think, pray, to get through the world?

Student. I mean not to get through the world at
 all;
 But over it.

Festus. Aspiring! You will find
 The world is all up-hill when we would do;
 All down-hill when we suffer. Nay, it will part
 Like the Red Sea, so that the poor may pass.
 We make our compliments to wretchedness,
 And hope the poor want nothing, and are well.
 But I mean, what profession will you choose?
 Surely you will do something for a name.

Student. Names are of much more consequence than things.

Festus. Well ; here's our honest, all-exhorting friend,
The parson — here the doctor. I am sure
The devil might act as moderator there,
And do mankind some service.

Lucifer. In his way.

Student. But I care neither for men's souls nor bodies.

Festus. What say you to the law ? Are you ambitious ?

Student. Nor do I mind for other people's business.

I have no heart for their predicaments :

I am for myself. I measure everything

By, what is it to me ? from which I find

I have but little in common with the mass,

Except my meals and so forth ; dress and sleep.

I have that within me I can live upon :

Spider-like, spin my place out anywhere.

Festus. To none of all the arts and sciences,—
Astronomy nor entomology,
Nor gunnery, for instance, then, you feel
Attracted heartily and mentally ?

Student. Why no ; there are so many rise and fall,
One knows not which to choose. As for the stars,
I never look on them without dismay.

Earth has outrun them in our modern mind,

By worlds of odds. Enough for us, it seems,

And our cold calculators, to jot down

Their revolutions, distances, and squares ;

And the bright laws which stars and spirits rule,

From deep-toned Saturn, and the thunderous bass

Of Heaven's ulterior orb ; the sea-god's star,

Whose inefficient ray, or good or ill

Fails to decide here, to the shrill-voiced moon ;

Are all laid out and buried grave on grave.

The fourfold worlds and elemental spheres,

Which in concentric circles, like the ring

That the magician stands in, from on high

Give spiritual calling to our earth,

And lord it over her ; yet in such wise

That still by them we may conjoin our souls

Unto the starry spirits of all worlds ;

Beyond the changeful mansions of the moon,

Beyond the burning heart of Heaven, where dwell
The governors of nature and the blessed,
All-knowing spirits and celestial,
And divine demons ; are all gone—extinct.
There is no danger now of knowing aught
Which ought not to be known. No more of that !—
And you, ye planetary sons of light !
Your aspects, dignities, ascendances ;
Your partile quartiles, and your platic trines ;
Your detriments, falls, governments, and gifts ;
And all your Heavenly houses and effects,
Shall meet no more devout expounders here :
Henceforward ye shall shine in vain to man.
The dubious beam of six-mooned Ouranus,
Light's loftiest round, better than best of stars
Or worse than worst ; old Saturn's wrath, whose ray
Malefic many a birth embittereth, else
With worldly weal o'eremployed ; the joy of Jupiter,
Great star of peace benefic ; lord of power,
Heaven's grander fortune, he ; the might of Mars,
Stern stirrer of rebellion, bloodshed, war ;
The Sun, the king of Heaven, and lord of light ;
Thy vegetative dominion, Luna fair !
The bliss of Venus, darling of the day ;
His wit, who hovereth mothlike round the Sun,
And cunning, prince of popular power and wealth ;
All who in astral congress rule earth's states ;
The exaltation of the Dragon's head,
Or act malignant of his darkening node ;
Unknown to shallow sciolists of facts,
Are all and aye abolished or ignored.
You too, ye juried signs, earth's sunny path
Upon her wheeling orbit, all farewell !
No more acknowledged, tended, ratified,
Your exaltations and triplicities,
Fiery, ærial, aqueous, or terrene,
Move mind no more ; nor moon's dim detriment ;
It matters nothing ; faith have men no more
In the eternal order God was deemed
To have made common once 'tween Heaven and earth ;
And all the starry inclusions of all signs,
Shall rise, and rule, and pass, and no one know

That there are spirit-rulers of all worlds,
Which fraternize with earth ; and, though unknown,
Hold in the shining voices of the stars,
Communion high, ever and everywhere.—
The mystic charm of numbers, and the sole
Oneness which is in all, of nature's great
Triadic principle, in all things seen ;
In man thus, as composed of thrice three forms
Intrinsic ; first, corporeally, blood,
Body, and bones ; next, intellectually,
Imagination, judgment, memory ;
And thirdly, spiritually, mind and soul,
And spirit, which unites with God the whole
Being, and comes from and returns to Him,—
Allures no more man's mind debased. Thus, too,
Of alchemy ; the golden starry stone,
Invisible, the principle of life,
The quintessence of all the elements,
Is still unbought ; still flows the stream of pearl
Beneath the magic mountain ; still the scent
As of a thousand amaranthine wreaths, which lures
All life unto its sweetness, floats around
Mistlike, the shining bath where Luna laves,
Or Sol, bright brother of that moonéd maid,
Triumphs in light ; the spiritual sun,
The Heavenly Earth smaragdine, and the fire-
Spirit of life, the live land, still exist,
Immortally, internally, unseen.
Still breathes the Paradisal air around
The universal whole ; the watery fire,
Destructive, yet impalpable to sense ;
The initial and conclusion of the world,
Yea, the beginning and the end of death ;
The secret which is shared 'tween God and man,
And which is nature only, wholly, still
In Heavenly gloom incomprehensible,
Wait the Deific will ; yea, still the light
Whereto all elements contribute, burns
About us and within us, world and soul.
The primal sperm and matter of the world,
Whose centre is the limit of all things ;
The snowy gold, the star and spirit seed

Which is to render rich and deathless all ;
 The self-begot, self-wedded, and self-born,
 Which the wind carries in its womb, all have
 And few receive ; the spirit of the earth,
 The water of immortal life still lives.
 The universal solvent of disease
 Still bounds through nature's veins ; and still in fine,
 The secrets only to be told by fire,
 Starry or beamless, central and extreme,
 Burn to be born. And other natures may
 Use them, and do. In Demogorgon's hall
 Still sits the universal mystery,
 Throned in itself and ministered unto
 By its own members :—Man, alas ! alone,
 The recreant spirit of the universe,
 Loves surface knowledge ; calls the crimes of crowds
 Virtue ; adores the useful vices ; licks
 The gory dust from off the feet of war,
 And swears it food for gods, though fit for fiends
 Only ; reversing just the Devil's state,
 When first he entered on this orb of man's—
 A fallen angel's form, a reptile's soul.

Lucifer. Oh ! this is libellous to man and fiend
 And brute together.

Student. All are art and part
 Of the same mystic treason. But enough !
 The most material, immaterial
 Departments of pure wisdom are despised.
 For well we know that, properly prepared,
 Souls, self-adapted knowledge to receive,
 Are by the truth desired, illumined ; man's
 Spirit, extolled, dilated, clarified,
 By holy meditation and divine
 Lore, fits him to convene with purer powers,
 Which do unseen surround us aye, and gladden
 In human good and exaltation ; thus
 The face of Heaven is not more clear to one,
 Than to another outwardly ; but one
 By strong intention of his soul perceives,
 Attracts, unites himself to essences
 And elemental spirits of wider range,

And more beneficent nature, by whose aid
 Occasion, circumstance, futurity,
 Impress on him their image, and impart
 Their secrets to his soul; thus chance and lot
 Are sacred things; thus dreams are verities.
 The soul which like the mountain lakelet lifts
 Its gaze to Heaven alone, will learn ere long
 To read the cloudy forms of future days
 Which glass them in its vision; or perceive,
 Clear through the crystal egg of time, the play
 Of spirits and forecomingness of things.
 The mysteries of numbers and of names
 Are nothing known of now; yet wot we well
 That natural perfection multiplied
 By spiritual, gives the names of God
 As known to men and angels; and that Fate
 Rules really and nominally all.
 But oh! alas for all earth's loftier lore,
 And spiritual sympathy of worlds!—
 There shall be no more magic nor cabala,
 Nor Rosicrucian nor Alchymic lore,
 Nor fairy fantasies; no more hobgoblins,
 Nor ghosts, nor imps, nor demons. Conjurors,
 Enchanters, witches, wizards, shall all die
 Hopeless and heirless; their divining arts
 Supernal or infernal—dead with them.
 And so it will doubtless be with other things
 In time; therefore I will commit my brain
 To none of them.

Festus. Perchance 'twere wiser nct.
 Man's heart hath not half uttered itself yet,
 And much remains to do as well as say.
 The heart is sometime ere it finds its focus;
 And when it does, with the whole light of nature
 Strained through it to a hair's breadth, it but burns
 The things beneath it, which it lights to death.
 I had not thought the world within its walls
 Held one so versed in ignorance, so expert
 In things impracticable. You have lived
 So centrally apart as not, perchance,
 To know, that studies once thought loftiest,

Have lost their footing by proved uselessness ;
While lowlier ones, which merely better man,
Bring him more near his Maker.

Student.

I believe

The world will neither better get nor worse
For aught I do or wish to do, or mean.
For public science patent to mankind
I reckon nought. Secret truth is that I seek.

Lucifer. And rightly. Pure intelligence alone,
Unmixed with moral aims, is truly wise.
To cheapen truth that every one may buy,
You must so thin the gold as makes it worthless.

Festus. Nay, but contrariwise ; the more you spread
The more you emulate truth's Deity,
In His best attribute, the gift of bliss
To others. Truth for its own sake's worth little ;
Communicated, priceless. Mix with men ;
Not slavewise to the mass ; but having gained
In secret freedom, truth, that moral gold
Which mind transmutes, perfective from all thought,
And hath in noblest souls immortal rule,
Impart to all prepared.

Student.

This alchemy

How shall I learn, whereby thought truth becomes
And knowledge, wisdom ;—magistry divine ?

Lucifer. We'll speak of this sometime at leisure. I
Know one who could unseal this hidden lore ;
And hold the wine of wisdom to their lips,
Who can appreciate her divinest draught.
Nay, more ; perchance can reconcile the aims
Of both ; and knowledge supplement with power.

Festus. Well, farewell, Mr. Student. May you never
Regret those hours which make the mind, if they
Unmake the body ; for the sooner we
Are fit to be all mind, the better. Blessed
Is he whose heart is the home of the great dead,
And their great thoughts. Who can mistake great
thoughts ?

They seize upon the mind—arrest and search,
And shake it—bow the tall soul as by wind—
Rush over it like rivers over reeds,

Which quaver in the current—turn us cold,
And pale, and voiceless ; leaving in the brain
A rocking and a ringing,—glorious,
But momentary, madness might it last,
And close the soul with Heaven as with a seal !
In lieu of all these things whose loss thou mournest,
If earnestly or not I know not, use
The great and good and true which ever live ;
And are all common to pure eyes and true.
Upon the summit of each mountain-thought
Worship thou God—with heaven uplifted head
And arms horizon stretched—for Deity is seen
From every elevation of the soul.
Study the light ; attempt the high ; seek out
The soul's bright path ; and since the soul is fire
Of heat intelligential, turn it aye
To the all-Fatherly source of light and life :
Piety purifies the soul to see
Perpetual apparitions of all grace
And power, which to the sight of those who dwell
In ignorant sin are never known. Obey
Thy genius, for a minister it is
Unto the throne of Fate. Draw to thy soul,
And centralize the rays which are around
Of the Divinity. Keep thy spirit pure
From worldly taint by the repellant strength
Of virtue. Think on noble thoughts and deeds,
Ever. Count o'er the rosary of truth ;
And practise precepts which are proven wise.
It matters not then what thou fearest. Walk
Boldly and wisely in that light thou hast ;—
There is a hand above will help thee on.
I am an omnist, and believe in all
Religions,—fragments of one golden world
Yet to be relit in its place in Heaven—
For all are relatively true and false,
As evidence and earnest of the heart
To those who practise, or have faith in them.
The absolutely true religion is
In Heaven only, yea in Deity.
But foremost of all studies let me not

Forget to bid thee learn Christ's faith by heart.
 Study its truths, and practise its behests :
 They are the purest, sweetest, peacefullest,
 Of all immortal reasons or records :
 They will be with thee when all else have gone.
 Mind, body, passion, all wear out—not faith,
 Nor truth. Keep thy heart cool, or rule its heat
 To fixed ends : waste it not upon itself.
 Not all the agony of all the damned,
 Fused in one pang, vies with that earthquake throb
 Which wakens it from waste to let us see
 The world rolled by for aye ; and that we must
 Wait an eternity for our next chance,
 Whether it be in Heaven or elsewhere.

Student.

Sir,

I will remember this most grave advice,
 And think of you with all respect.

Festus.

Well, mind !

The worst men often give the best advice.
 Our deeds are sometimes better than our thoughts.
 Commend me, friend, to every one you meet :
 I am an universal favourite.
 Old men admire me deeply for my beauty ;
 Young women for my genius and strict virtue ;
 And young men for my modesty and wisdom.
 All turn to me, whenever I speak, full-faced,
 As planets to the sun, or owls to a rushlight.
 Farewell !

Student. I hope to meet again.

Festus.

And I.—

Yonder's a woman singing. Let us hear her.

Singer. In the grey church tower
 Were the clear bells ringing,
 When a maiden sat in her lonely bower
 Sadly and lowly singing ;
 And thus she sang, that maiden fair,
 Of the soft blue eyes and the long light hair :
 This hand hath oft been held by one
 Who now is far away ;
 And here I sit and sigh alone,
 Through all the weary day.
 Oh, when will he I love return ?
 Oh, when shall I forget to mourn ?

Along the dark and dizzy path
 Ambition madly runs,
 'Tis there they say his course he hath,
 And therefore love he shuns;
 Oh, fame and honour bind his brow,
 For so he would be with me now!
 In the grey church tower
 Were the clear bells ringing,
 When a bounding step in that lonely bower
 Broke on the maiden singing;
 She turned, she saw; oh, happy fair!
 For her love who loved her so well was there.

Lucifer. And we might trust these youths and maidens
 The world was made for nothing but love, love! [fair,
 Now I think it was made but to be burned.

Festus. And if I love not now, while woman is
 All bosom to the young, when shall I love?
 Who ever paused on passion's fiery wheel?
 Or trembling by the side of her he loved,
 Whose lightest touch brings all but madness, ever
 Stopped coldly short to reckon up his pulse?
 The car comes—and we lie—and let it come;
 It crushes—kills—what then! It is joy to die.
 Enough shall not fool me. I fling the foil
 Away. Let me but look on aught which casts
 The shadow of a pleasure, and here I bare
 A breast which would embrace a bride of fire.
 Pleasure—we part not! No! It were easier
 To wring God's lightnings from the grasp of God.
 I must be mad: but so is all the world.
 Folly! It matters not. I am all things to myself.
 If my heart thundered, would the world rock? Well—
 Then let the mad world fight its shadow down;
 There soon will be nor sun, nor world, nor shadow.
 And thou, my blood, my bright red running soul—
 Rejoice thou, like a river in thy rapids!
 Rejoice—thou wilt never pale with age, nor thin;
 But in thy full dark beauty, vein by vein,
 Fold by fold, serpent-like, encircling me,
 Like a stag, sunstruck, top thy bounds and die.
 Throb, bubble, sparkle, laugh and leap along!
 Make merry while the holidays shall last.
 Heart! I could tear thee out, thou fool! thou fool!

And strip thee into shreds upon the wind :

What have I done that thou shouldst serve me thus ?

Lucifer. Let us away. We have had enough of this.

Festus. The night is glooming on us. It is the hour
When lovers will speak lowly, for the sake
Of being nigh each other ; and when love
Shoots up the eye like morning on the east,
Making amends for the long northern night
They passed ere either knew the other loved.
It is the hour of hearts, when all hearts feel
As they could love to mad death, finding aught
To give back fire ; for love, like nature, is
War—sweet war ! Arms ! To arms ! so they be thine,
Woman ! Old people may say what they please—
The heart of age is like an emptied wine-cup ;
Its life lies in a heel-tap—how can they judge ?
'Twere a waste of time to ask how they wasted theirs.
But while the blood is bright, breath sweet, skin smooth,
And limbs all made to minister delight—
Ere yet we have shed our locks like trees their leaves,
And we stand staring bare into the air—
He is a fool who is not for love and beauty.
I speak unto the young, for I am of them,
And always shall be. What are years to me ?
Traitors ! that vice-like fang the hand ye lick :
Ye fall like small birds beaten by a storm
Against a dead wall, dead. I pity ye.
Oh ! that such mean things should raise hope or fear ;
Those Titans of the heart, that fight at Heaven
And sleep by fits on fire ; whose slightest stir's
An earthquake. I am bound and blest to youth.
Oh ! give me to the young—the fair—the free—
The brave, who would breast a rushing burning world
Which came between them and their hearts' delight.
None but the brave and beautiful can love.
Oh, for the young heart like a fountain playing !
Flinging its bright fresh feelings up to the skies
It loves and strives to reach—strives, loves in vain :
It is of earth, and never meant for Heaven.
Let us love both, and die. The sphinx-like heart,
Consistent in its inconsistency.
Loathes life the moment that life's riddle is read :

The knot of our existence is untied,
 And we lie loose and useless. Life is had ;
 And then we sigh, and say, can this be all ?
 It is not what we thought—it is very well—
 But we want something more—there is but death.
 And when we have said, and seen, and done, and had,
 Enjoyed, and suffered, all we have wished and feared—
 From fame to ruin, and from love to loathing—
 There can come but one more change—try it—death.
 Oh ! it is great to feel we care for nothing ;
 That hope, nor love, nor fear, nor aught of earth
 Can check the royal lavishment of life ;
 But like a streamer strown upon the wind,
 We fling our souls to fate and to the future.
 And to die young is youth's divinest gift,—
 To pass from one world fresh into another,
 Ere change hath lost the charm of soft regret,
 And feel the immortal impulse from within
 Which makes the coming, life—cry away, on !
 And follow it while strong—is Heaven's last mercy.
 There is a fire-fly in the southern clime
 Which shineth only when upon the wing ;
 So is it with the mind ; when once we rest,
 We darken. On ! said God unto the soul,
 As to the earth, for ever. On it goes,
 A rejoicing native of the infinite—
 As is a bird of air—an orb of Heaven.

SCENE—*The Centre.*

LUCIFER and FESTUS.

Lucifer. Behold us in the fire-crypts of the world
 Through seas and buried mountains, tomblike tracts,
 Fit to receive the skeleton of Death
 When he is dead—through earthquakes, and the bones
 Of earthquake-swallowed cities, have we wormed
 Down to the ever burning forge of fire ;
 Whereon in awful and omnipotent ease
 Nature, the delegate of God, brings forth
 Her everlasting elements ; and breathes
 Around that fluent heat of life which clothes

Itself in lightnings, wandering through the air,
 And pierces to the last and loftiest pore
 Of Earth's snow-mantled mountains. In these vaults
 Are hid the archives of the universe ;
 And here, the ashes of all ages gone,
 Each finally inurned. These pillars stand,
 Earth's testimony to eternity.

Festus. All that is solid now was fluid once ;
 Water, or air, or fire, or some one
 Permanent, permeating, element ;
 As in this focal, world-evolving fire
 Like what I see around—the vacuous power
 Whereon the world is based, e'en as wherein
 It rolls, I must believe.

Lucifer. The original
 Of all things is one thing. Creation is
 One whole. The differences a mortal sees
 Are diverse only to the finite mind.

Festus. This marble-walled immensity o'erroofed
 With pendent mountains glittering, awes my soul.
 God's hand hath scooped the hollow of this world ;
 Yea, none but His could ; and I stand in it,
 Like a forgotten atom of the light
 Some star hath lost upon its lightning flight.

Lucifer. Here may'st thou lay thy hand on nature's
 heart,
 And feel its thousand yearéd throbbings cease.
 High overhead, and deep beneath our feet,
 The sea's broad thunder booms, scarce heard : around,
 The arches, like uplifted continents
 Of starry matter, burning inwardly,
 Stand ; and, hard by, earth's gleaming axle sleeps,
 All moving, all unmoved.

Festus. Age here on age
 Lie heaped like withered leaves. And must it end ?

Lucifer. God worketh slowly ; and a thousand years
 He takes to lift His hand off. Layer on layer
 He made earth, fashioned it and hardened it
 Into the great, bright, useful thing it is ;
 Its seas, life-crowded, and soul-hallowed lands
 He girded with the girdle of the sun,
 That sets its bosom glowing like Love's own

Breathless embrace, close-clinging as for life;
 Veined it with gold, and dusted it with gems,
 Lined it with fire, and round its heartfire bowed
 Rock-ribs unbreakable; until at last
 Earth took her shining station as a star,
 In Heaven's dark hall, high up the crowd of worlds.
 All this and thus did God; and yet it ends.
 The ball He rolled and rounded melts away
 E'en now to its constituent atomies.

Festus. It is enough. Though here were posited
 All secrets of existence, natural
 Or supernatural, dwell not here would I,
 Though 'twere to drain profoundest fountains. No!
 I love it not, the science nor the scene.
 I long to know again the fresh green earth,
 The breathing breeze, the sea and sacred stars.
 These recollections crowd upon my soul,
 As constellations on the evening skies,
 And will not be forgotten. Let us leave.

Lucifer. Aught that reminds the exile of his home
 Is surely pleasant. I, friend, am content.

Festus. I cannot be content with less than Heaven.
 O Heaven, I love thee ever! sole and whole,
 Living and comprehensive of all life;
 Thee, agey world, thee, universal Heaven,
 And Heavenly universe; thee, sacred seat
 Of intellective Time, the thronéd stars
 And old oracular night;—by night or day,
 To me thou canst not but be beautiful,
 Boundless, all-central, universal sphere!
 Whether the sun all-light thee, or the moon,
 Embayed in clouds, mid starry islands round,
 With mighty beauty inundate the air;
 Or when one star, like a great drop of light,
 From her full flowing urn hangs tremulous;
 Yea, like a tear from her, the eye of night,
 Let fall o'er nature's volume as she reads;
 Or when in radiant thousands, each star reigns
 In imparticipable royalty,
 Leaderless, uncontrasted with the light
 Wherein their light is lost, the sons of fire,
 Arch element of the Heavens; when storm and cloud

Debar the mortal vision of the eye
 From wandering o'er thy threshold,—more and more
 I love thee, thinking on the splendid calm
 Which bounds the deadly fever of these days—
 The higher, holier, spiritual Heaven.
 And when this world, within whose heartstrings now
 I feel myself encoiled, shall be resolved,
 Thee I shall be permitted still, perchance,
 To love and live in endlessly.

Lucifer.

All here

Thou seest hath holden fellowship with gods ;
 With eldest Time and primal matter, space,
 And stars, and air, and all-inherent fire,
 The watery deep and chaos, night, the all,
 And the interior immortality,
 And first-begotten Love. These rocks retain
 Their caverned footsteps printed in pure fire.
 Those were the times, the ancient youth of earth,
 The elemental years, when earth and Heaven
 Made one in holy bridals,—royal gods
 Their bright immortal issue : when men's minds
 Were vast as continents and not as now
 Minute and indistinguishable plots,
 With here and there acres of untilled brains ; when lived
 The great original, broad-eyed, sunken race,
 Whose wisdom, like these sea-sustaining rocks,
 Hath formed the base of the world's fluctuous lore ;—
 When too, by mountainous travail human might
 Sought to possess the everlasting Heavens,
 And incommunicable, by the right
 Of self-acquirement and high kindred with
 Celestial virtues ;—when the mortal powers—
 Forecounsel, wisdom, and experience,
 Teachers of all arts, founders of all good,
 With Godhood strove, and gloriously failed—
 In failure half successful ; as these scenes,
 Fire-fountains, and volcano-utterances,
 Earth-heavings, island-vomitings, evince.

Festus. The world hath made such comet-like advance
 Lately on science, we may almost hope,
 Before we die of sheer decay, to learn
 Something about our infancy. But me

This troubles not. Were all earth's mountain chains
 To utter fire at once, what a grand show
 Of pyrotechny for our neighbour moon!
 Let us ascend; but not through the charred throat
 Of an extinct volcano.

Lucifer. This way—down
 So thread we the world-bead at once.

Festus. Haste, haste!
 Life is too brittle, time too brief to waste.

SCENE—*A ruined Temple.*

FESTUS and LUCIFER.

Festus. Here will I worship solely.

Lucifer. It is a fane
 Once sacred to the Sun.

Festus. It matters not
 What false god here hath falsely been adored;
 Or what life-hating rites these walls have viewed:
 The truly holy soul, which hath received
 The unattainable, can hallow hell.
 Each orb is to itself the heart of Heaven.
 And each belief wherein man roots his hope,
 And lives, and dies, the favourite of God.
 Earth's tale is told in Heaven, Heaven's told in earth.
 Since either 'gan one only faith hath been;
 The faith in God of all. A thousand types
 A thousand tribes have chosen. But the hour
 Already hawklike, preens its wings for flight,
 When all shall be remassed in one great creed;
 All being shall be rebegotten; all
 Worship rededicate; all signs afresh
 Thrice hallowed; the degenerate lapse of time
 Having twice fused the symbol with the truth;
 All dark things brightened, all contrariants blent;
 And truth and love, perradiating life,
 Be the new poles of nature; earth at last
 Joining the great procession of the skies.
 True faith in faithful hearts hath ever been;
 But craft with sanguine darkness all hath fouled.
 Now to the only true and Triune God
 These walls shall echo praise, if never yet.

Bring me a morsel of the fire without;
 For I will make a sacred offering
 To God, as though the High Priest of the world.
 He lacks not consecration at best hands
 Whom Thou hast hallowed, Lord! by choice; and these,
 The elements I offer, Thou hast made
 Holy, by making them.

Lucifer.

Lo! here is fire.

I will await thee in the air.

Festus.

Withdraw!—

O Thou! the sole and spiritual sun,
 Fountain and fane of Heaven's immortal fire,
 Whom all the lives of all the elements,
 Lamb, fish, and dove,—the all-producing earth,
 The purifying wave, perfective fire;
 Whom all the faiths and creeds, and rites of old
 As now and ever, to the end of Time,
 In precognition of eternal truth
 Foreshadowed and foretyped, hear Thou, Heaven-throned!
 While one by Thy divine salvation graced,
 A servant of Thy boundless law of love,
 This temple redevotes to purer end
 Than they who built or who abandoned knew.
 The world is one great prophecy of Thee
 And Thou Thine own fulfilment. Heaven and earth
 Exhaust themselves in symbols of their God;
 Whose breath from servile matter formed at first
 The fading frostwork of created things.
 All nature typeth Thee and Thine; the moon,
 Virgin of Heaven, who nightly bringeth forth
 The light which is Thine own in Heaven to earth;
 Thou herald star which bathest earth in dew,
 And ledest the sun into the sea to his
 Eternal baptism, ere yet with light
 He floods the world, and cleaves the breathing skies
 With all pervading and inspiring fire;
 And thou, sweet earth, which sittest weeping there
 In the sun's shadow, like the penitent one
 Before His cross, the darkness of whose death
 Eclipsed all day; thou too and all the stars,
 The flock of light, born of the seed of light,
 Shall sometime range in bliss the spirit-pasturing skies;

Catch the vivific secret of the sun,
And quaff serene the waters of the sun ;
Whose orb doth always, night by night, descend
Into the halls of Hades and the abyss
Of that invisible death which all men dread ;
But doomed to die yet 'neath His morrowing glance,
Who made it, and encrowned it with all light.
Wing of the world which bears it on through Heaven,
Light ! let us love thee, we to thee return
Through our Sun's bosom, at whose orient ray
The gods all vanished like the ghosts of night ;
Thee, Light unlimited, whose ancient sheen
Was spiritual man, angelic mind,
The emanant creation, matter, form,
And oval orbit of the universe.
All stars are steps in the great scale of Heaven,
Up to God's throne, from Time's last orb which eyes
The inner and the utter infinite,
Round to that highest, deepest, midmost site,
Where Heaven's star-music ends, for ever quelled
In the supremest silence of the sun.
For through all spherul forms, the central circling soul
In bright, expansive progress, fit to match
The march of angels in the van of Time,
By-passing all night's constellated chart,
Where God hath set His burning seal, the sun,
Reseeks thee, lone and universal light,
Clear glory and the all-involving Heavens.
Glory of air, and Lord of light, O sun !
Great wonder-worker, seer of all the skies ;
The gates of whose house are the east and the west ;
Whom God begat on light which first He loved
Encircling in Himself, but who in shades
Of primal night wast nursed ; whom all the hours
Of time attend, whose travel round the world
Makes one eternal triumph ! unto whom
All earth is sacred ; Yes ! O sun, to thee
The death dispeller, life elicitor,
Shepherd of worlds, and harmonist of Heaven,
The music of whose golden lyre is light ;
One vast and living garden of the Lord,
Watered by light streams, where the vine divine

And bright flock numbered in spiritual
Perfectness, flourish alike in multitude of days
Immortal as thy years, O nightlayer !
The elements thy car draw ; and all signs
And natural miracles from thee proceed,
The ever coming light ; bright mystery ;
Sense binding, mind attracting, passion taming,
Light born, light generating, light all life !
Thine eloquent fire lights aye their starry heads
Who in celestial conclave rule with thee,
And pour upon the crown of darkness light.
The seasons are thy gospels, and thy twelve
In spherul order and a starry chain
Through gods, kings, signs, toils, tribes, gems, miracles,
Heroes and peers, unite the universe
In love to thee, thy being's boundless law,
Creator's symbol, and creation's seal.
The ages are thy offspring ; and the years,
Links of the everlasting chain of change
Thou bind'st us with, progenitor of spheres !
To thee the azure serpent golden sealed
And noiseless creeping time, that sloughs its years
And lays its world-eggs in thy brightness is
Hallowed, and them inspirest thou with life.
World-navelled oracle, whose very light
Blindeth the strongest eye, whose beam of life,
Death darting, thou reclaimest through the aye
Revolving and evolving universe ;
Who to thyself, earth's twin chief boons of life
Dost sanctify for sustenance and joy—
Symbols of soul and body—that all might
Know both in Him thou symbollest, in God.
All signs, all seasons records are of Thee,
And thy divinest dignities and deeds.
Thou Lamb of God who didst initiate
Eternity, prophetic with that sign
Of universal sinlessness and love ;
And typed next by the sacrificial ox,
Earth-emblesing. Twin Being, God with man,
Whose double nature indicates in Heaven
The natural and the spiritual. Who
Leading the soul to spirit dost progress

Backwards to Deity through penitence ;
And lionlike—the lion of the law,
The lamb of love—dost lord it over all life
And rage against all sin, the sin of Being,
Dreadful to all save virgin ; seed and branch
Of the immortal maid beloved of God,
Bride of the spirit, and her radiant child,
And hallowed in all worship ;—who dost hold
The balance of the Just One o'er the world,
Well weighing work and faith ; with scorpion sting
Treating the carnal conscience self-condemned ;
Who bend'st the Heavens before Thee like a bow,
And earth, Thine orbéd arrow, shootest through air ;—
Who through Thine infinite mercy madest Thyself
The scape-goat of this dark world-wilderness,
Bearing the sins of soul in every sphere ;
And from celestial fountains pourest down
Floods of regenerating grace, wherein
Like some great life that dwelleth in the deep
Of love, thou art and livest, man-god, Christ !
Thou art the hero of the universe ;
The Theohuman Being erst all time
And all incarnate emanations ; Thou
Who at Thy birth didst slay sin's serpent-brood ;
And through the foul-stalled stable of this world
The sourceless circular river of Thy love
Didst turn ; redeem the soul of man, Thy friend,
From death and hell ; destroy the dragon fiend
And his seven deadly heads, devouring life ;
Regain thy golden apples, Paradise !
And to complete the mystic cycle, rise,
Well proven and approved of God to Heaven.
Time tells his tale by shadows, and by clouds
The wind records its progress ; by dark doubts
The spirit, swiftening on its Heavenward course.
The shadow beareth witness to the light.
Thine, Lord ! are all the elements and worlds ;
The sun is Thy bright servant, and the moon
Thy servant's servant ; the round rushing earth,
The lifeful air ; the thousand wingéd winds ;
The Heaven-kinred fire ; the continental clouds ;
The sea broad breasted, and the trancéd lake ;

The rich arterial rivers, and the hills
That wave their woody tresses in the breeze,
In grateful undulation, all are Thine.
Thine are the snow-robed mountains circling earth,
As the white spirits God the Saviour's throne ;
Thine the bright secrets, central in all orbs,
And rudimental mysteries of life.
The sun-starred night, the ever maiden-morn,
The all prevailing day, consummate eve,
Confess them Thine through the perpetual world :
All art hath wrought from earth, or science lured
From truth, like flame out of the fire cloud, are
Thine ; Thine the glory, all belongs to Thee,
Finite, indefinite and infinite,
As mountains to a world, as worlds to Heaven.
The high domed city and the toilful town
And early hamlet ; all that live or die,
That flourish or decay, that change, or stand
Before Thy face, unchanged, exist for Thee,
Or are not at Thy bidding : Thine, all souls ;
Atom and world, the universe is Thine !
Thou canst as easily turn Thy kindest eye
From comprehending the bright Infinite,
To this crushed temple, where the wild flower decks
Its earthquake-rifted walls, and the birds build
In leafage of its columned capitals,
And to this crumbling heart I offer here,
As trust Thine own eternity. Behold !
Accept, I pray Thee, Lord ! this sacrifice ;
These elemental offerings simple, pure,
Which in the name of man I make to Thee,
Formless, save prostrate soul and kneeling heart—
In token of Thy perfect monarchy
And all comprising mercy. These are they !
A flowery turf, a branch, a burning coal,
A cup of water and an empty bowl.
This air-filled bowl is typic of the world
Thou fillest with Thy spirit, and the soul,
Receptive of Thy life-conferring truth !
This the symbolic element wherefrom
We are to be reborn, wherein made pure ;
Those whom Thou choosest are to be redeemed ..

Out of the mighty multitudes of men ;
Yet all as of one nature be redeemed.
This coal, torn flaming from the earth, proclaims
Thy sin-consuming mercy, as of earth ;
And may our souls ever aspire to Thee,
As these pale flames unto the stars ; this turf
Is as the earthy nature and abode
We would subject to Thee ; and lieth here,
The representative of every star
And world-extended matter. Lord ! this branch,
Which waveth high o'er all, oh, let it sign
Thine own Eternal Son's humanity,
Which was on earth yet ever lives in Heaven,
Redemptive of all Being. Golden Branch !
Which, in the eld time, seer's and sybil's words,
Full of dark central thought and mystic truth,
Foretold should overspread the spirit world,
And with its fruit heal every wound of Death,—
Tree of eternal life, Thee all adore.
Accept this prayer, O Saviour ! that if men
Can nothing do but sin, Thou may'st forgive
The creature crime, and bring back all to Thee.
Thou art the one who made the universe ;
Yet didst Thou walk on earth ; Thou brakest bread
And drankest wine with men, betokening so
Thine own complete, Divine Humanity.
May all obey Thy words and do Thy will !
Thy Cross be multiplied, till every heart
Become a Calvary, whereon is wrought
The mystery of our nature suffering death,
And the diviner secret of the soul,
And perfect sacrifice ; and where above
This deadly level of creation's orb,
The immortal spirit mountainlike aspires
Into thine infinite, O eternity !
What though the written word be born no more,
The spirit's revelation still proceeds,
Evolving all perfection ; therefore most
We bless Thee God our Saviour ; whoso are
Saved are in Thee ; the One, the Twin, Triune.
The antiformal spirit wants no word
Whereby to mark its union with the soul ;

For kindled, like a sacrifice of old,
 By Heaven's spontaneous fire, the soul achieves
 In death its final cause, accomplishing
 In very aspiration being's end.
 Thou doest all things rightly; all are best,
 Sorrow, and joy, and power, and suffering.
 For sorrow comes of nature, of God bliss;
 The mysteries of one are full of woe,
 Cavernous darkness, shrieks and fire; of Heaven,
 Light, peace, and jubilation, such as He,
 The all felicitating sun, instils.
 Providing therefore, all things that must be
 And ought to be, as Thou dost and hast done,
 From the beginning even to the end,
 This heart let cease from prayer, these lips from praise,
 Save that which life shall offer pauselessly.
 Now go I forth again, refreshed, consoled,
 Upon my time-enduring pilgrimage.
 Ho! Lucifer!

Lucifer. I wait thee.

Festus. Whither next?

Lucifer. As thou wilt, apposite or opposite.
 It is light translateth night; it is inspiration
 Expounds experience; it is the west explains
 The east; it is time unfolds Eternity.

SCENE—A Metropolis ;—Public Place.

FESTUS and LUCIFER.

Festus. My thoughts go cloudlike round the world,
 nor rest.

I am on fire to realize the fate
 Which darkly in the future's depths I have seen;
 Or else am with the mightiest folly mocked
 Which ever impeded a soul to madness. Speak!
 When shall this world acknowledge me?

Lucifer. Not now;

Never, till self-compelled. The time will come.
 Have patience. 'Tis the blessing of the angels.

Festus. Patience! say slow self-murder.

Lucifer. Wait for what

Is on the wing already, or else have
 The aimless satisfactionless result,
 As of a lunge into the empty air.
 Knowledge, and love, and power are the three thrones,
 Each over each, whereon thy soul shall sit,
 In order due, as promised. Patience, man.
 As yet we are but minors, both of us.

Festus. Of pleasure one has hardly had a glimpse.

Lucifer. Each pleasure hastes thee to thy end, and
 man's ;

Each new sought joy, each freshly proven power,
 But draws the ends of all things, like a hood,
 Around thy fated head the closer. Come ;
 Bethink thee of thy pact.

Festus. I do. With me
 The sun of life shall mount the sky no more ;
 It is one eternal setting.

Lucifer. As thou wilt.
 Thine abstinence can only lengthen pain,
 Indulgence shorten pleasure.

Festus. Which to choose
 Were wiser ?

Lucifer. There is reason in them both.
 But mortal man will never be all wise.

Festus. Nay, come then, pretty patience. Sand by sand
 The world is worn away, and continents
 And oceans take each other's places here.
 The mountain's summit and the sea's last depth
 Is but a question after all of time.
 Most greatest things are gradual. Star on star
 The Heavens fulfil their issue ; line by line
 Old ocean saps earth's vaulted base, and whelms
 In transubstantiation infinite,
 'Neath his abysmal bowl the mountain tops ;
 Beam after beam truth warms the spirit here,
 Dipped in substantial lightning of the sun,
 And now with an eternal saving saved.
 Life to enjoy I feel one must conform
 Both to the laws and by-laws of the world.
 What can be done here ?

Lucifer. Oh ! a thousand things,
 As well as elsewhere.

Festus. True : it is a place
Where passion, occupation, or reflection,
May find fit food or field ; but suits not me.
My burden is the spirit, and my life
Is henceforth solely spiritual.

Lucifer. Well :—
At the occurrent season, too, it shall
Be satisfied, It might be even now,
From things about us. But look, here comes a man
Thou knowest well.

Festus. I do. Stop, friend ! of late
I have not seen thee. Whither goest thou now ?

Student. I am upon my business, and in haste.

Festus. Business ! I thought thou wast a simple
schemer ;

A theorist of most nebulous mark and views ;
Founder of many imaginary states ;
And student of all things impossible.

Student. Mayhap I am. There is a visionary
Business as well as visionary faith.

My nature is to sympathize with men,
Not to participate in their actual aims.
What others strive by traffic to achieve,
I seek by hidden mastery to attain.

Let me but bring to fruit my next thought, then,—
Bid me compete with states, and watch who wins.

Festus. And doth the alchemic faith still hold thee in
Its chains unbroken ? Art thou yet as erst,
Seeking to verify thine earlier hopes ;
Secluded in the ravenous search for gold ?

Student. Though mingling more with men, my mind is
still

Leased to the great invention. I, in sooth,
Have all my life been living in a mine,
Lancing the world for gold. I have not yet
Fingered the right vein. Oh ! I often wish
The time would come again, which science prates of,
When earth's bright veins ran ruddy, virgin gold.

Festus. When the world's gold melts, all the poorer
metals,
All things less pure, less precious, all beside,
Will vanish ; nought be left but gems and gold.

If all were rich, gold would be penniless.
 But oh! what thousand things there are in life
 More worth than wealth. When glancing round the
 world

We mark the mighty ignorance of the mass
 In all lands, their vast servitude of mind;
 And think what sometime it would be to see
 Freedom and wisdom substituted, thought
 Fails, and the heart faints at the great conceipt.
 Where'er a wrong exists, a right is slain;
 And wrongs seem everywhere. Serfs I despise;
 For nations, if so, must so be by choice.
 Tyrants, or multitudinous, or one,
 I hate. But how will justice-loving time
 Reckon with all the despots, many and mean,
 Who falsify with weight of swords and chains
 The balance civil hath o'er savage life,
 Who knows? That mercy may be satisfied
 With so much Justice sweeps with level hand
 From off the measure's head, we'll hope.

Lucifer.

Yes, hope.

Student. Deep in earth's caverned heart, I see her now,
 The Nemesis of Nations. Stern she sits
 Her monumental throne. The hush of death
 Spreads round her like a halo. She is girt
 With silence as a girdle. Even Hope
 Might deem her dead. Yet lives she; live she will.
 She hath a vital secret in her breast,
 As though she nursed a god which scarcely breathes,
 The freedom of the future. To all else
 Superior in that secret, nought beside
 Heeds she; but hears, indifferent, o'er her head
 The ebb, or flow, of empire; and the march
 Of many a generation; and but smiles,
 And rocks her foot, contemptuous. Not for these
 Moves she; nor is she moved: nor doth she watch.
 Dumb prophetess of woe! she hath not been
 Incarcerate; nor abandoned; nor beguiled;
 Nor of the good suspected; nor by kings
 Ever forgot; if, haply, one hath eyed,
 Nor shuddering shrunk before that stately stare,
 Her pale and dominant brow, and mounded breast,

Elate with life :—nay, she hath never been,
 Save by her own serene and sacred will,
 Exiled from Earth's face. What, then, doth she there,
 Darkling in central solitudes? Alas!
 Of her divine prevision all devoid,
 Unworthy suitors hath she many an one,
 Who her to forfeiture would tempt, nor own
 God's gracious gift, empowering her to abide
 The hour of destiny. But when the dew,
 Now wet, hath ripened to the thunder-cloud,
 And man's breath to God's lightning, one shall come
 And ope her sealéd hand; take out the spell
 And put in it a spear; and sanctify
 Her forehead with a crown; and wreathe her loins
 With silver serpents; and so lead her forth
 To head reviving manhood. Would to Heaven
 I, too, might see the awakening of that day;
 Day-dawn, or sun-down, speed it, God of right!

Lucifer. This is the spirit I want to see afoot.
 We two can aid each other. Preach these views.

Student. The wise and good wish well to liberty,
 Throughout all lands; but aim to win her cause
 By some bold manly movement from the heart
 Of all united nations; not by base
 Assassin's craft, of hangman's well repaid.

Festus. But how to gain this, how to inaugurate
 This grand concerted blessing, seems a knot
 Time's wearied fingers work at till they bleed;
 And baffled races vainly pray for. Still
 The riddle must be read. The hour must come
 When retributive mercy shall succeed
 Her sterner sister Justice, and aye reign
 In parity divine with righteous love.

Lucifer. Our Auricrucian friend could doubtless
 make

His banded brotherhoods well subservient here;
 For if a few illumined with all truth
 Initiate in all wisdom, hidden and open,
 Armed with all wealth, could but forefit the world
 For perfect freedom, man might wish no more.

Student. I love the wise initiates; but I doubt
 If freedom e'er will prove the lot of all

Or many. Hands are made for manacles,
And feet for fetters. Now, too, I must hence.

Lucifer. Nay, time is never lost if friends are made.
I have a secret I would fain impart
To one who would make right use of it. Now, mark !
Chemists say there are fifty elements,
And more ;—wouldst know a ready recipe
For riches ?

Student. That indeed I would, good sir.

Lucifer. Get then these fifty earths or elements,
Or what not. Mix them up together. Put
All to the question. Tease them well with fire,
Vapour, and trituration—every way ;
Add the right quantity of lunar rays ;
Boil them, and let them cool, and watch what comes.

Student. Thrice greatest Hermes ! but it must be ; yes !
I'll go and get them ; good day,—instantly. [*Goes.*]

Lucifer. He'll be astonished, probably.

Festus. He will,
In any issue of the experiment.
Perhaps the nostrum may explode and—

Lucifer. Nonsense !

Festus. There needs no satire on men's rage for gold ;
Their nature is the best one, and excuse.
And now, what next ?

Lucifer. Why, let us take our ease
Beside this feathery fountain. It is cool
And pleasant, and the people passing by,
Fit subjects for two moralists like us.
Here we can speculate on policy,
On social manners, fashions, and the news.
Now the political aspect of the world,
At present, is most cheerful. To begin,
Like charity, at home. Out of all wrongs
The most atrocious, the most righteous ends
Are happiest wrought.

Festus. It oft-times chances so.

Lucifer. Take of the blood of martyrs, tears of slaves,
The groans of prisoned patriots, and the sweat
Wrung from the bones of Famine, like parts. Add
Vapour of orphan's sigh, and wail of all
Whom war hath spoiled, or law first fanged, then gorged ;

The stifled breath of man's free natural thought ;
 The tyrant's lies ; the curses of the proud ;
 The usurpations of the lawful heir ;
 The treasonous rebellions of the wise ;
 The poor man's patient prayers ; and let all these
 Simmer, some centuries, o'er the slow red fire
 Of human wrath ; and there results, at last,
 A glorious constitution, and a grand
 Totality of nothings ;—as we see.—

(*Soldiers pass ; music, &c.*)

Man is a military animal,
 Glories in gunpowder, and loves parade ;
 Prefers them to all things.

Festus. Of recipes,
 Enough ! Life's but a sword's length, at the best.

Lucifer. War, war, still war ! from age to age, old Time
 Hath washed his hands in the heart's blood of Earth :

Festus. Yet, fields of death ! ye are earth's purest pride ;
 For what is life to freedom ? War must be
 While men are what they are ; while they have bad
 Passions to be roused up ; while ruled by men ;
 While all the powers and treasures of a land
 Are at the beck of the ambitious crowd ;
 While injuries can be inflicted, or
 Insults be offered ; yea, while rights are worth
 Maintaining, freedom keeping, or life having,
 So long the sword shall shine ; so long shall war
 Continue, and the need for war remain.

Lucifer. And yet all war shall cease.

Festus. It must and shall.
 Some news seems stirring ; what, I know not yet.

Lucifer. Nor I. I heard that one of Saturn's moons
 Had flown upon his face and blinded him.
 It was also said, in circles I frequent
 At times, his outer ring was falling off.
 If I should find, I'll keep it. It might fit
 A little finger such as mine, I think.
 Poor Saturn ! much I doubt he is breaking up.
 But for these news, I know not what they be.
 Some one perhaps has lit on a new vein
 Of stars in Heaven : or cracked one with his teeth,

To look inside it, or made out at last
The circulation of the light; or what
Think'st thou?

Festus. I know not. Ask!

Lucifer. Sir, what's the news?

Passer-by. The news are good news, being none at all.

Lucifer. Your goodness, sir, I deem of like extent:
We heard the Great Bear was confined of twins.

Stranger. It is not unlikely; stars do propagate.

Festus. And so much for civility and news.
This city is one of the world's social poles,
Round which events revolve; here, dial-like,
Time makes no movement but is registered.

Lucifer. Yon gaudy equipage! hast ever seen
A drowning dragon-fly floating down a brook,
Topping the sunny ripples as they rise,
Till in some ambushed eddy it is sucked down
By something underneath? Thus with the rich;
Their gilding makes their death conspicuous.

Festus. Some men are nobly rich, some nobly poor;
Some the reverse. Rank makes no difference.

Lucifer. The poor may die in swarms unheeded. They
But swell the mass of columned ciphers. Oh,
Ye poor, ye wretched, ye bowed down by woe!
Thank God for something, though it were but this,
He fire, ye ashes!

Festus. Thou art surely mad.

Lucifer. I meant to moralize. I cannot see
A crowd, and not think on the fate of man—
Clinging to error as a dormant bat
To a dead bough. Well, 'tis his own affair.

Festus. All homilies on the sorts and lot of men
Are vain and wearisome. I want to know
No more of human nature. As it is,
I honour it and hate it. Let that do.

Lucifer. Here is a statue to some mighty man,
Who beat his name on the drum of the world's ear
Till it was stupefied; and, I suppose,
Not knowing what it was about, reared up
This marble mockery of mortality,
Which shall outlive the memory of the man
And all like him who water earth with blood,

And sow with bones, or any good he did,
 As eagles outlive gnats. But never mind!
 Why carp at insect sins, or crumb-like crimes?
 The world, the great imposture, still succeeds;
 Still, in Titanic immortality,
 Writhes 'neath the burning mountain of its sins.

Festus. There's an old adage about sin and some one.
 The world is not exactly what I thought it,
 But pretty nearly so; and after all,
 It is not so bad as good men make it out,
 Nor such a hopeless wretch.

Lucifer. For all the world
 Not I would slander it. Dear world, thou art
 Of all things under Heaven by me most loved,
 The most consistent, the least fallible.
 Believe me ever thine affectionate

Lucifer. P. S. Sweet, remember me!

Festus. Wilt go to the cathedral?

Lucifer. No, indeed;
 I have just confessed.

Festus. Well, to the concert, then?

Lucifer. Some fifteen hundred thousand million years
 Have passed since last I heard a chorus.

Festus. Good!

Lucifer. In sooth, I cannot calculate the time.
 There are no æras in Eternity,
 No ages. Time is as the body and
 Eternity the spirit of existence.

Festus. That would I learn and prove.

Lucifer. The finite soul
 Can never learn the Infinite, nor be
 Informed by it, unaided.

Festus. Be it so.

What shall we do?

Lucifer. I put myself in your hands.

Festus. Wilt go on 'Change?

Lucifer. I rarely speculate.
 Steady receipts are mostly to my taste.
 Besides, I spurn the system. Take my arm.

Festus. But something must be done to pass the time.

Lucifer. True; let us pass, then, all time.

Festus. I shall be
 Most happy; only shew me how.

Lucifer, Why, thus.
 I have the power to make thy spirit free
 Of its poor frame of flesh, yet not by death,—
 And reunite them afterwards! Wilt thou
 Entrust thyself to me?

Festus. In God I trust,
 And in His word of safety. Have thy will.
 Where shall it be effected?

Lucifer. Here and now.
 Recline thou calmly on yon marble slab,
 As though asleep. The world will miss thee not;
 Its complement is perfect. I will mind
 That no impertinent meddler troubles there
 Thy transcended frame. The brain shall cease its life-
 Engrossing business, and the living blood,
 The wine of life, which maketh drunk the soul,
 Sleep in the sacred vessels of the heart.
 Three steps the sun hath taken from his throne,
 Already downwards, and ere he hath gone,
 Who calmeth tempests with his mighty light,
 We will return; and till then the bright rain
 Of yonder fountain fails not.

Festus. Thus be it!
 Come! we are wasting moments here that now
 Belong, of right, to immortality,
 And to another world.

Lucifer. Prepare!—

Festus. And thou?

Lucifer. I vanish altogether.

Festus. Excellent!

Lucifer. Body and spirit part!—

SCENE—*Air.*

FESTUS and LUCIFER.

Festus. Where, where am I?

Lucifer. We are in space and time, just as we were
 Some half a second since; where wouldst thou be?

Festus. I would be in Eternity and Heaven;
 The spirit, and the blessed spirit, of
 Existence.

Lucifer. And thou shalt be, and shalt pass

All secondary nature ; all the rules
 And the results of time : upon thy spirit
 These things shall act no more ; their hands shall be
 Withered upon thee, as the ray of life
 Returns to that it came from : they shall cease
 In thee, like lightning in the deadening sea.
 But not now ; we have worlds to go through, first.
 When spirit hath deposited its earth,
 And brightly, freely flows, self-purified
 In its own action, acted on by God,
 It holds the starry transcript of the skies
 Booklike within its bosom, evermore.
 But thine even now, exhausted, not exhaled,
 Bears the design of earthly discontent,
 Not sacred satisfaction. Unto him
 Whose soul is saved, all things are clear as stars,
 And, to the chosen, safety :—to none else.
 Nor cold insurgent heart, nor menial mind
 Can compass this : it is the way of God :
 The starry path of Heaven which none can tread
 But spirits high as Heaven which He hath raised ;
 Who were of Him before all worlds, and are
 Beloved and saved for ever while they live.
 Thou of the world art yet, with motives, means,
 And ends as others.

Festus. I will no more of it.

Lucifer. Oh, dream it not ! Thou knowest not the
 depth
 Of nature's dark abyss, thyself, nor God.
 Light over strong and darkness over long
 Blind equally the eye. Thou mayst yet rise
 And fall as often as the sea.

Festus. How comes it,
 Being a spirit, that I see not all
 As spirit should ?

Lucifer. Thou lackest life and death.
 The life of Heaven and the death of earth.
 Then wouldst Thou see, in harmony with God,
 Creation's strife.

Festus. Death alters not the spirit.

Lucifer. Death must be undergone ere understood.
 One world is as another. Rest we here.

SCENE—*Another and a better World.*

FESTUS and LUCIFER.

Festus. What a sweet world! Which is this, Lucifer?

Lucifer. This is the star of evening and of beauty.

Festus. Otherwise Venus. I will stay here.

Lucifer.

Nay:

It is but a visit.

Festus. Let us look about us.

It is Heaven—it must be; aught so beautiful
Must, I am sure, have feeling. Cannot worlds live?
Least things have life. Why not the greatest, too?
An atom is a world, a world an atom,
Seen relatively: death an act of life.

Lucifer. This is a world where every loveliest thing
Lasts longest; where decay lifts never head
Above the grossest forms; and matter here
Is all transparent substance; the flower fades not,
But every eve gives forth a fragrant light;
Till by degrees the spirit of each flower
Essentially consuming the fair frame
Refines itself to air; rejoining thus
The archetypal stores where nature dwells
In pre-existent immortality.
The beautiful die never, here: Death lies
A dreaming—he has nought to do—the babe
Plays with his darts. Nought dies but what should die.
Here are no earthquakes, storms, nor plagues; no hell
At heart; no floating flood on high. The soil
Is ever fresh and fragrant as a rose—
The skies, like one wide rainbow, stand on gold—
The clouds are light as roseleaves—and the dew,
'Tis of the tears which stars weep, sweet with joy—
The air is softer than a loved one's sigh—
The ground is glowing, with all priceless ore,
And glistening with gems like a bride's bosom—
The trees have silver stems and emerald leaves—
The fountains bubble nectar—and the hills
Are half alive with light. Yet it is not Heaven.

Festus. Oh, how this world should pity man's! I love

To walk earth's woods when the storm bends his bow,
And volleys all his arrows off at once;
And when the dead brown branch comes crashing close
To my feet, to tread it down, because I feel
Decay my foe: and not to triumph's worse
Than not to win. It is wrong to think on earth;
But terror hath a beauty even as mildness;
And I have felt more pleasure far on earth,
When, like a lion or a day of battle,
The storm rose, roared, shook out his shaggy mane,
And leapt abroad on the world, and lay down red,
Licking himself to sleep as it got light;
And in the cataract-like tread of a crowd,
And its irresistible rush, flooding the green,
As though it came to doom, than e'er I can
Feel in this faery orb of shade and shine.
I love earth!

Indwelled by warrior souls, sweep ceaseless round
 The sun, and rise or fall as they desire,
 An earth-life or a Heaven-life had in turn ;
 Whose sword-play makes the lightning, and whose voice
 In battle thunder, as on high they war ;—
 The pearly palaces and odorous groves,
 The infinite brightness and the heavenly forms,
 The starry transmigrations of all souls,
 And ever-bounding joy or restful bliss,
 Which they who dwell beside the amber main
 Believe await them in the world past death ;
 Eden, where life was toilless, and gave man
 All things to live with, nothing to live for ;—
 The Moslem's bowers of love, and streams of wine,
 And palaces of purest adamant,
 Where dark-eyed houris, with their young white arms,
 The ever virgin, woo and welcome ye,—
 The Chaldee's orbs of gold, where dwells the primal light,
 Were all too pure for thee ; yet shalt thou be
 Surely in Heaven, ere Death unlock the heart.
 I said that I would shew thee marvels here ;
 For here dwell many angels—many souls
 Who have run pure through earth, or been made pure
 By their salvation since. It is a mart
 Where all the holy spirits of the world
 Perform sweet interchange, and purchase truth
 With truth, and love with love. Hither came he,
 The Son—the Saviour of the universe ;
 Not in the stable-state He went to earth—
 A servant unto slaves ; but as a God,
 Carrying His kingdom with Him, and His Heaven.

Festus. Lo, here are spirits ; and all seem to love
 Each other.

Lucifer. He hath only half a heart
 Who loves not all.

Festus. Speak for me to some angel.
 See, here is one, a very soul of beauty :
 It is the Muse. I know her by the lyre
 Hung on her arm, and eye like fount of fire.

Muse. Mortal, approach. I am the holy Muse,
 Whom all the great and bright of spirit choose.
 It is I who breathe my soul into the lips

Of those great lights whom death nor time eclipse ;
It is I who wing the loving heart with song,
And set its sighs to music on the tongue :
It is I who watch, and, with sweet dreams, reward
The starry slumbers of the youthful bard ;
For I love every thing that is sweet and bright.
And but this morn, with the first wink of light,
A sunbeam left the sun, and as it sped,
I followed, watched, and listened what it said :
Wherefore, with all this brightness am I given
From sun to earth ? Am I not fit for Heaven ?
From God I came once ; and, though worlds have passed,
Ages, and dooms, yet I am light to the last.
Whatever God hath once bent to His will
Is sacred ; so the world's to be loved still.
What of this swift, this bright, but downward being,
Too burning to be borne—too brief for seeing ?
What is mine aim—mine end ? I would not die
In dust, or water, or an idiot's eye :
I would not cease in blood, nor end in fire,
Nor light the loveless to their low desire :
No ; let me perish on the poet's page,
Where he kisses from his beauty's brow all age ;
Spelling it fair for aye, and wrinkle scorning,
As when first that brow brake on him like a morning.
But yet I cannot quit this line I tread,
Though it lead and leave me to the eyeless dead :
It is mine errand : 'tis for this I come.
And live, and die, and go down to my doom.
This is my fate—right and bright to speed on.
God is His own God : fate and fall are one.
Straight from the sun I go, like life from God,
Which hits now on a Heaven, now on a clod.
But, spite of all, the world's air warps our way,
And crops the roses off the cheek of day ;
As some false friend, who holds our fall in trust,
Oils our decline, and hands us to the dust.
Where are the sunbeams gone of the young green earth ?
Search dust and night ; our death makes clear our birth.
It said—and saw earth ; and one moment more
Fell bright beside a vine-shadowed cottage door ;
In it came—glanced upon a glowing page,

Where, youth forestalling and foreshortening age—
Weak with the work of thought, a boyish bard,
Sate suing night and stars for his reward ;
The emerald crownlets which to bards belong,
And bloom perennial in their silver song.
The sunbeam swerved and grew, a breathing dim,
For the first time, as it lit and looked on him :
His forehead faded—pale his lip and dry—
Hollow his cheek—and fever fed his eye.
Clouds lay about his brain, as on a hill,
Quick with the thunder thought, and lightning will.
His clenched hand shook from its more than midnight clasp,
Till his pen fluttered like a wingéd asp ;
Save that no deadly poison blacked its lips :
'Twas his to life-enlighten, not eclipse ;
Nor would he shade one atom of another,
To have a sun his slave, a god his brother.
The young moon laid her down as one who dies,
Knowing that death can be no sacrifice,
For that the sun, her god, through nature's night
Shall make her bosom to grow great with light.
Still he sate, though his lamp sunk : and he strained
His eyes to work the nightness which remained.
Vain pain ! he could not make the light he wanted ;
And soon thought's wizard ring gets disenchanted.
When earth was dayed—was morrowed—the first ray
Perched on his pen, and diamonded its way ;
The sunray that I watched ; which, proud, to mark
The line it loved as deathless, there died dark—
Died in the only path it would have trod,
Were there as many ways as worlds to God ;
There, in the eye of God again to burn,
As all man's glory unto God's must turn.
And so may sunbeams ever guide his pen,
And God his heart, who lights the morn of men ;
For this life is but Being's first faint ray ;
And sun on sun, and Heaven on Heaven, make up God's day.
And were there suns in day as stars in night,
They would show but like one ray from out His full-sphered
light :
As but one momentary gleam would fly :
Or, as years, the arrows of eternity.

Festus. Poets are all who love—who feel great truths—
And tell them : and the truth of truths is love.
There was a time—oh, I remember well !
When, like a sea-shell with its sea-born strain,
My soul aye rang with music of the lyre ;
And my heart shed its lore as leaves their dew—
A honey dew, and throve on what it shed.
All things I loved ; but song I loved in chief.
Imagination is the air of mind ;
Judgment its earth and memory its main ;
Passion its fire. I was at home in Heaven :
Swiftlike I lived above : once touching earth,
The meanest thing might master me : long wings
But baffled. Still and still I harped on song.
Oh ! to create within the mind is bliss ;
And, shaping forth the lofty thought, or lovely,
We seek not, need not Heaven : and when the thought—
Cloudy and shapeless, first forms on the mind,
Slow darkening into some gigantic make,
How the heart shakes with pride and fear, as Heaven
Quakes under its own thunder ; or as might,
Of old, the mortal mother of a god,
When first she saw him lessening up the skies.
And I began the toil divine of verse,
Which, like a burning bush, doth guest a god.
But this was only wing-flapping—not flight ;
The pawing of the courser ere he win ;
Till by degrees, from wrestling with my soul,
I gathered strength to keep the fleet thoughts fast,
And made them bless me. Yes, there was a time
When tomes of ancient song held eye and heart—
Were the sole lore I recked of : the great bards
Of Greece, of Rome, and mine own master land,
And they who in the holy book are deathless ;
Men who have vulgarized sublimity,
And bought up truth for the nations ; parted it,
As soldiers lotted once the garb of God ;
Men who have forged gods—uttered—made them pass :
In whose words, to be read with many a heaving
Of the heart, is a power, like wind in rain—
Sons of the sons of God, who, in olden days,
Did leave their passionless Heaven for earth and woman,

Brought an immortal to a mortal breast,
And, like a rainbow clasping the sweet earth,
And melting in the covenant of love,
Left here a bright precipitate of soul,
Which lives for ever through the lines of men,
Flashing by fits, like fire from an enemy's front ;
Whose thoughts, like bars of sunshine in shut rooms,
Mid gloom, all glory, win the world to light ;
Who make their very follies like their souls ;
And like the young moon with a ragged edge,
Still, in their imperfection, beautiful ;
Whose weaknesses are lovely as their strengths,
Like the white nebulous matter between stars,
Which, if not light, at least is likest light ;
Men whom we build our love round like an arch
Of triumph, as they pass us on their way
To glory and to immortality ;
Men whose great thoughts possess us like a passion,
Through every limb and the whole heart ; whose words
Haunt us as eagles haunt the mountain air ;
Thoughts which command all coming times and minds,
As from a tower a warden ; fix themselves
Deep in the heart as meteor stones in earth,
Dropped from some higher sphere ; the words of gods,
And fragments of the undeemed tongues of Heaven ;
Men who walk up to fame as to a friend,
Or their own house, which from the wrongful heir
They have wrested, from the world's hard hand and
gripe ;
Men who, like Death, all bone but all unarmed,
Have ta'en the giant world by the throat, and thrown him ;
And made him swear to maintain their name and fame
At peril of his life ; who shed great thoughts
As easily as an oak looseneth its golden leaves
In a kindly largesse to the soil it grew on ;
Whose rich dark ivy thoughts sunned o'er with love,
Flourish around the deathless stems of their names ;
Whose names are ever on the world's broad tongue,
Like sound upon the falling of a foree ;
Whose words, if wingéd, are with angels' wings ;
Who play upon the heart as on a harp,
And make our eyes bright as we speak of them ;

Whose hearts have a look southwards, and are open
To the whole noon of nature ; these I have waked,
And wept o'er night by night ; oft pondering thus :
Homer is gone : and where is Jove ? and where
The rival cities seven ? His song outlives
Time, tower, and god—all that then was, save Heaven.

Muse. Yea, but the poor perfections of thine earth
Shall be as little as nothing to thee here.

Festus. God must be happy, who aye makes ; and since
Mind's first of things, who makes from mind is blessed
O'er men. Thus sayeth the bard to his work :—I am
Thy god, and bid thee live as my God me :
I live or die with thee, soul of my soul !
Thou camest and went'st, sunlike, from morn to eve ;
And smiledst fire upon my heaving heart,
As the sun on the sea, till it arose
And dashed about its house all might and mirth,
Like ocean's tongue in Staffa's stormy cave.
Thou art a weakly reed to lean upon ;
But like that reed the false one filched from Heaven,
Full of immortal fire—immortal as
The breath of God's lips—every breath a soul.

Muse. Mortal, the Muse is with thee : leave her not.

Festus. Once my ambition to another end
Stirred, stretched itself, but slept again. I rose
And dashed on earth the harp, mine other heart,
Which ringing, brake ; its discord ruinous
Harmony still ; and coldly I rejoiced
No other joy I had, wormlike, to feed
Upon my ripe resolve. It might not be :
The more I strove against, the more I loved it.

Lucifer. Come, let us walk along. So say farewell.

Festus. I will not.

Muse. No : my greeting is for ever.

Lucifer. Well, well, come on !

Festus. Oh ! shew me that sweet soul
Thou brought'st to me the first night that we met.
She must be here, where all are good and fair :
And thou didst promise me.

Lucifer. Is that not she
Walking alone, up-looking to thine earth ?
For, lo ! it shineth through the mid-day air.

Festus. It is, it is !

Lucifer. Well, I will come again.

[*Goes.*

Festus. Knowest thou me, mine own immortal love ?
How shall I call thee ? Say, what mayst thou be !

Angela. I am a spirit, Festus ; and I love
Thy spirit, and shall love, when once like mine,
More than we ever did or can even now.
Pure spirits are of Heaven all heavenly.
Yet marvel not to meet me in this guise,
All radiant like a diamond as it is.
We wander in what way we will through all,
Or any of these worlds, and whereso'er
We are, there Heaven is ; here, and there too, God.

Festus. Thou dost remember me ?

Angela. Ay, every thought
And look of love which thou hast lent to me,
Comes daily through my memory as stars
Wear through the dark.

Festus. And thou art happy, love ?

Angela. Yes : I am happy when I can do good.

Festus. To be good is to do good. Who dwell here ?
Are they all deathless—happy ?

Angela. All are not :
Some err, though rarely—slightly. Spirits sin
Only in thought ; and they are of a race
Higher than thine—have fewer wants and less
Temptations—many more joys—greater powers.
They need no civil sway : each rules himself—
Obeys himself : all live, too, as they choose,
And they choose nought but good. They who have
come

From earth, or other orb, use the same powers,
Passions, and purposes, they had ere death ;
Although enlarged and freed, to nobler ends,
With better means. Here the hard warrior whets
The sword of truth, and steels his soul against sin.
The fierce and lawless wills which trooped it over
His breast—the speared desires that overran
The fairest fields of virtue, sleep and lie
Like a slain host 'neath snow ; he dyes his hands
Deep in the blood of evil passions. Mind !

There is no passion evil in itself;
 In Heaven we shall enjoy all to right ends.
 There sit the perfect women, perfect men;
 Minds which control themselves, hearts which indulge
 Designs of wondrous goodness, but so far
 Only as soul extolled to bliss and power
 Most high sees fit for each, divinely. Here,
 The statesman makes new laws for growing worlds,
 Through their forefated ages. Here, the sage
 Masters all mysteries, more and more, from day
 To day, watching the thoughts of men and angels
 Through moral microscopes; or hails afar,
 By some vast intellectual instrument,
 The mighty spirits, good or bad, which range
 The space of mind; some spreading death and woe
 On far off worlds—some great with good and life.
 And here the poet, like that wall of fire
 In ancient song, towers o'er the universe;
 Lighting himself, where'er he soars or dives,
 With his own bright brain—this is the poet's heaven.
 Here he may realize each form or scene
 He e'er on earth imagined; or bid dreams
 Stand fast, and faery palaces appear.
 Here he has Heaven to hear him; to the which
 He sings, with mainlike voice and song, the love
 Which lent him his whole strength, as is the wont
 Of all great spirits and good throughout the world.
 Oh! happiest of the happy is the bard!
 Here, too, some pluck the branch of peace wherewith
 To greet a suffering saint, and shew his flood
 Of woe hath sunken: this I love to do.
 My love, we shall be happy here.

Festus.

Shall I

Ever come here?

Angela.

Thou mayst. I will pray for thee,

And watch thee.

Festus. Thou wilt have, then, need to weep.

This heart must run its orbit. Pardon thou

Its many sad deflections. It will return

To thee and to the primal goal of Heaven.

Angela. Practise thy spirit to great thoughts and things,

That thou mayst start, when here, from vantage ground.
We can foretell the future of ourselves,
And fateful only to himself is each.

Festus. Speak to me of the future.

Angela. Why alone
Of the to come?

Festus. Because I love and dread,—
As might a vessel laden deep with gold,
To cross a stream upon whose further side
Safety allures, but in whose midst is death—
The untold pleasures of the life wherewith
My soul is freighted.

Angela. God's supremest gift,
Whereby all Beings gauge their high advance
In Heaven, to perfect joy, is this; to learn
The everlasting future. Less or more,
All happy spirits can, as one with Him.
The more their power their longing is the less,
Contented with Divinity; but I
Am only at His feet, not yet His breast.
A natural sadness born, O Festus, born
Of the sad passed—though passed, though sad, still dear—
Clouds yet my vision of eternal things.
And human love yet more than nothing seems.
Oh! speak not of the future. Speak to me
Thou of the passed.

Festus. Immortal! from thine eye
Wipe out the tear of time. The gates of hell
Are barred upon the passed. Their hold is like
The grasp of gravitation. Shall the passed
Ever evade the death-clutch of the world?
No, they shall, like two cars, wheel locked in wheel,
Roll down together to destruction's depths.
Oh, rede me of the future what thou canst,
Divine one! Heaven is in the possible.

Angela. Oh, once ere now I cast my spirit sight
Into the orient future, to preview
The features of thy lifelot; but, alas!
I saw what I were fain to have remained
Unweeting of for ever. Now once more
Thou wouldst revive my woe.

Festus.

Nay, if it grieve thee,

I will not wake the future. Let it sleep
Till its time come.

Angela. Yet, with that woe I saw
A web of joy was woven for thyself,
For me, for many, by the love of God;
Who, granting His own Spirit to the form
Of Divinized humanity, unbuilds
The superseded soul, and making all
Spirits anew in Him, doth make all one.
This is the infinite calm which circumscribes
All local lifestorms; this the law of peace
Which doth constrain all strife; the rule of bliss
Which disannuls all woe. Haste, blessed hour,
To the divine fulfilment of the end
Of total Being.

Festus. Thus serened, speak on;
And with the sequence of my life forearm
The soul that is within me. Angel, speak!—
Angela. Once at my prayer 'twas given me, as I said,
The future to foresee; and I beheld
A vision of thyself begirt with forms—
Nay, more than one—of beauty; though to one
Lovely and pure as loving, I thy heart
Had trustfully bequeathed; but sad was this,
And that was blithe of blee; and that—enough!
I cannot all denote them; but I know
Malign I felt at first to see the heart
I loved by them usurped. But when I thought
From these calm heights, of all earth's cares and woes,
And life's brief paradise, the hour of love,
And knew it aye a failure, as of old,
Though a divine experiment, I wept,
And prayed, and found forgiveness for my fault.
And none of them were happier than was I.
Before each one, successive as before
The fates, I marked thy spirit bow; and saw
That all but formed one family of love.
My soul then gladdened, and I knew that joy
The seal of my salvation. I beheld
All things rejoice beneath the light of love,
Which seemed to burn within me, and beam through,
Lost in the boundless loneliness of God.

I saw earth's war-scarred countenance sweetly glide
Into the angel lineaments of peace ;
And gentlest sorrow dream herself to joy.
Tears shed on earth were reaped in Heaven in smiles,
And what was sown in sighs was raised in songs.
Rapt in this vision with extatic bliss,
Myself secure from all external chance,
As though the one pure atomie of light
Impounded in the centre of the sun—
Ere yet the end of all, methought I saw
Each beauty gathered by the careful hand
Of the great gatherer who forgetteth none.
I felt my being brightened and made fit
For heavenly regions, gladdening in their glee,
And grieving in their grief ; as, with thine own,
One blessed fate I viewed involving all,
One everlasting end. All earthly love
Consummated with thine consumed I saw ;
And love divine, supreme, embracing all.
For as the countless globelets of the dew
Image each one the sun, so, in the dawn
Of Heaven's great day, the seed of God shall shine
Each with His golden likeness in his breast.
Thus far my vision. May the all-kind God,
Who crowns creation with o'erflowing love,
Bless it to thee ! And wouldst thou further know,
Or of the passed, or the calm coming time,
Seek yonder sphere serene ; for changeless there,
In lofty and in lonely light sedate,
The sibyl angel sits, star studying ;
Two only things before her—Heaven and earth.
Her ask, and she will answer to the full.
Foreboded thence, and fortified in soul,
Retrieve thou the terrene. Endure, enjoy ;
For He who all conditions of life's law
Fulfilled, by death our deathlessness assures.
All deaths are echoes but of His, in whom
The life and death which crossed each other made
The talisman of immortality.

Festus. So shall it be : thy will and my deed, one
I do not fear to die ; for though I change
The mode of being, I shall ever be.

World after world shall fall at my right hand ;
 The glorious future be the passed despised :
 All now that seemeth bright will soon seem dim,
 And darker grow, like carth, as we approach it ;
 While I shall stand upon yon Heaven which now
 Hangs over me. If aught can make me seek
 Other to be than that lost soul I fear me,
 It is that thou lovest me. Heaven were not Heaven
 Without thee.

Lucifer. I am here now. Art thou ready ?
 Let us go.

Angela. Well—farewell. It makes me grieve
 To bid a loved one back to yon false world—
 To give up even a mortal unto death.
 Thou wilt forget me soon, or seek to do.

Festus. When I forget that the stars shine in air—
 When I forget that beauty is in stars—
 When I forget that love with beauty is—
 Will I forget thee : till then, all things else.
 Thy love to me was perfect from the first,
 Even as the rainbow in its native skies :
 It did not grow ; let meaner things mature.

Angela. The rainbow dies in Heaven and not on earth ;
 But love can never die : from world to world,
 Up the high wheel of Heaven, it lives for aye.
 Remember that I wait thee, hoping here.
 Life is the brief disunion of that nature
 Which hath been one and same in Heaven ere now,
 And shall be yet again, renewed by death.
 Come to me when thou diest !

Festus. I will, I will.

Angela. Then, in each other's arms, we will waft
 through space,
 Spirit in spirit, one ; or we will dwell
 Among these immortal groves : or watch new worlds,
 As, like the great thoughts of a Maker-mind,
 They are rounded out of chaos : and we will
 Be oft on earth with those we love, and help them ;
 For God hath made it lawful for good souls
 To make souls good ; and saints to help the saintly.
 That thou right soon mayst fold unto thy heart
 The blissful consciousness of separate

Oneness with God, in Him in whom alone
 The saved are deathless, shall become, for thee,
 My earliest, earnest, and most constant prayer.
 Oh ! what is dear to creatures of the earth ?
 Life, love, light, liberty ? But dearer far
 Than all—and oh ! an universe more divine—
 The gift, which God endows His chosen with,
 Of His own uncreated glory,—His
 Before all worlds, all ages, and reserved
 Till after all for those He loves and saves.
 As when the eye first views some Andean chain
 Of shadowy rolling mountains, based on air,
 Height upon height, aspiring to the last,
 Even to Heaven, in sunny snow sheen, up
 Stretching like angels' pinions—nor can tell
 Which be the loftiest nor the loveliest :
 As when an army, wakening with the sun,
 Starts to its feet all hope, spear after spear,
 And line on line reundulating light,
 While night's dull watchfires reek themselves away—
 So feels the spirit when it first receives
 The bright and mountainous mysteries of God,
 Containing Heaven ; moving themselves towards us,
 In their free greatness, as by ships at sea
 Come icebergs, pure and pointed as a star,
 Afar off, glittering ; of invisible
 Depth, and dissolving in the light above.

Festus. My prayer shall be that thy prayer be fulfilled.
 I must to earth again. Farewell, sweet soul !

Angela. Farewell ! I love thee, and will oft be with
 thee.

Lucifer. I like earth more than this : I rather love
 A splendid failing than a petty good ;
 Even as the thunderbolt, whose course is downwards,
 Is nobler far than any fire which soars.

Festus. I am determined to be good again—
 Again ? When was I otherwise than ill ?
 Doth not sin pour from my soul like dew from earth,
 And, vapouring up before the face of God,
 Congregate there, in clouds, between Heaven and me ?
 What wonder that I lack delight of life ?
 For it is thus—when amid the world's delights,

How warm soe'er we feel a moment among them—
 We find ourselves, when the hot blast hath blown,
 Prostrate, and weak, and wretched, even as I am.
 I wish that I could leap from off this star,
 And dash my soul to atoms like a glass.

Lucifer. I have done nothing for thee yet. Thou shalt
 See Heaven, and hell, and all the sights of space,
 Whene'er thou choosest.

Festus. Not then now.

Lucifer. Up! rise!

Festus. No; I'll be good; and will see none of them.

Lucifer. Remember, there's the moon.

Festus. My memory

Is most tenacious of the things of light,
 And the commands of love.

Lucifer. Oh, happy thought.

Festus. Earth draws us like a loadstone. We are
 coming.

SCENE—*The Moon.*

FESTUS, LUCIFER, and LUNIEL.

Festus. Thus far along these silent wastes of light
 Have we, unseeing and unseen, held on.
 Time's sands seem turned to seed-pearl as they glide,
 In luminous slumber, through his shadowy glass,
 To glorified repose; while snowy Peace
 Hushes the infant soul, here born again,
 To wonder and delight. And yet these rocks,
 Whose flames once flourished in the face of Heaven,
 Like burning banners o'er a fiend host, there
 Arrested in ignition, fire made stone,
 Speak out of other state than quiet once.
 Not Chaos when in travail of the earth,
 And groaning with the birth-pang, nor the sun's
 Deserts of fire, sea deep with drifting flame,
 Nor all contortions of the solemn clouds,
 Can match the immarbled madness of this orb:
 As though some vast wild passionate soul, ablaze
 Through all its nature with volcanic sin,
 By God's one word translated into light,
 And the pure beauty of celestial peace.

With adamantine silence seized, had 'come
That instant changeless, deathless and divine.
Still meet we not what in this sphere we seek.
Methinks my mission here may fail.

Lucifer.

And if

I knew not to an ace our whereabouts,
I too might deem this were the very world
Of all poetic possibilities. Look !
It is bounded west by light, and east by night,
And north and south by nothing and the wind.

Festus. Lo, now the angel, as foretold. She makes
Hither. O beauty holy and divine,
Life-eyed, soul-crowned, illuminate with truth.
Mark how unearthly fair and pure ; the air
Of sad felicity ; the mingled mien
Of innocence and knowledge absolute.

Lucifer. During the dateless ages of the Heavens,
Ere Time had whet his infant scythe, or left
His cradling clouds, or yon pale watery star
Heaven's giant tear, first cast its shade o'er space,
That angel knew I well ; but now no more.

Luniel. Earth-child, behold the angel of this orb.
What tidings dost thou bring ? or art thou now
The earnest of the race that is to come,
Foretold by friendly spirits of the skies,
Peopling with soul these silvery solitudes,
Whose advent I have ages waited for ?

Festus. O holy and divine one, I am man ;
And not the hero of the destined race
Thou hopest ; not here inducted but allowed.
Sun, planet, satellite, all typéd spheres
Of ever various being, it is mine
To search and pass through, but abide in not.
I latewhile, by Divine permission, thus
At yon bright wanderer of the solar realm
Arriving, and thence earthwards tending, now
Am hither bidden by a spirit blessed,
A sweet and sacred sister of my soul ;
Who there, in that clear orb of loveliest ray,
Nigher the sun one grade than we, sojourns
In untranscended light, that I might learn
From thee, the lonely watcher of the skies,

Sole mediatrix 'tween the sun and earth,
 The fates to be fulfilled. And such we hold
 Thy sanctity of nature, and unweighed
 Largesse of light, thou wilt unscal for me
 The fountain of the future, and charm forth
 The wave of wonder.

Luniel. Thou, too,—who art thou?

Lucifer. Master and servant am I here of him;
 Thine equal, more and less. But come not I
 Inquiring or desiring aught of thee.
 The future is to me mere nothingness;
 The passed but as a dream; the present is
 My portion; therein only do I live.
 Among these soulless solitudes, in sooth,
 Seems little call for me. But here I am.

Luniel. Oh well, I ween, do we each other know;
 For all things, soul or spirit, here shew clear.
 Within the radiant region of this orb,
 Diaphanous as light, nor mist nor cloud
 The unconditioned vision dims; and thou,
 Tempter of Life, to me art thoroughly known.
 I know thee as the evil spirit of Time.
 But mystery is there in thine origin,
 Thy ministry, thy fall, which, none create,
 Not even thou thyself canst fathom. God
 Only can read what He hath written there
 In hieroglyphic darkness, and He will;
 That His great works may know themselves and Him,
 Ere all the ages end. From God I own
 Power to foretell what only He foreknows;
 And ye are both predestined beings. Such
 His pleasurable will, that they who serve
 Rule with Him—who obey not, serve Him still.

Lucifer. It is even so; thou sayest truth.

Festus.

Thy words,

More precious to mine ear than seaborne pearls,
 Pierce me with light. Speak on, pray.

Luniel.

Mortal, know

Our spirits are the keys to all we see;
 And whoso, first permitted and inspired
 Of Heaven, but pondereth well the page of life
 Before him, shall unlock at last the store

Hid in it and all others. To predict
 The coming it is needfullest to con
 The passed and present. As to things of time,
 Time is divisional ; eternity
 All unitive. Perfection is to come.
 I thus the mutual destinies have learned
 Of thine orb and mine own.

Festus. Inform me, then,
 O holy and divine one ! who now tread,
 On this sole purpose bent, these shores of light,
 Silently shining, by thy spirit graced,
 The god-state of the future.

Luniel. Be it so.
 Attend ye ; for ye witnesses are both
 To wisdom of her world-comprising plan.
 One is the end and origin of all.
 God, from the first, was solely in Himself ;
 Eternal, infinite, inconceivable,
 Only, God wholly, solely, all and one.
 Nothing was in existence God except :
 Nor time nor world, life, flesh, sense, soul, nor sin ;
 Nay, there was no negation ; God sole all.
 But willing to create, His hands He spread
 From east to west, and constituted space ;
 From north to south He planned the boundless map,
 And consecrated it. The universe
 Is but a state of being, and a life
 And time condition of the will Divine ;
 A veil whose web is light embossed with stars ;
 Through which the Eternal Essence kindly deigns
 To manifest itself ; and all He makes,
 As buds and tender branches bourgeoning,
 From Being's sacred stem, making to bless.
 Deep in the universal centre of all things,
 Infix'd the Infinite, for gods God made,
 Therefore, the Heavens ; and dark ætherial space,
 For the immortal angels, love sustained,
 Which occupy with Him eternity,
 And sin not, err not, doubt not. Next He made,
 By might omnific and Deific love,
 Matter, for beings of a nature mixed,
 Whose forms should be material, blessed with life,

Vegetive, fleshly ; these instinctive, those
Unconscious ; and for these and Him to come,
With starry globes unnumerable, suns,
Planets, and moons, and meteors, circumvolved
Each round the other, round their central sun,
In countless clouds and firmamental wholes,
Whose orbits scarce demean infinitude,
Did He the void impeople ; He the suns
Of self-genetic, space-creating light,
As types and tokens of His Heavenly love
And beatific power, with spirits vast
And world ordained intelligences, fined
From all creation, through its thousand grades.
For man the mighty earth, and all the orbs
Revolving round the middle thrones of fire,
Compacted of the elements, wherein
Dwell separately all less perfect souls ;
For him the moon, reflective, ministrant.
Of all He chose one system as a law,
The great ensample of His starry scheme,
One sun, one earth, one moon, one race, one tribe.
He rules by choice the universal whole.
All that are angels, therefore, held, or gods,
And worshipped by the ignorant soul, are man ;
Man, self-inclusive of all lower forms,
All higher natures less than the Most High.
For man is of two kinds, the spiritual
And fleshly ; yet we both have but one name ;
Since Angelhood is Manhood glorified ;
Raised up distinctly to Divinity ;
And homed and heavened within the embrace of God.
The final sum that science crowns her with
This ; between God and Nature, man alone,
However various his conditions be,
Through space's universal round, and all
The countless orbs of viewless skies, exists ;
Nature's essential summit he and God's
Deific incarnation : this weigh well ;
For spirit is refracted in the flesh,
And shews as crooked what is straightness' self.
Call all that is not God nor nature, man ;
Nor fiend nor angel but his kith and kin.

God, therefore, and the world, and man, are all.
 Man is himself the midst, the third great form,
 Wherein the former two Divine extremes
 Unite in vital essence. Partly viewed,
 His double nature is to each allied ;
 Conjoinedly, they embrace themselves in him ;
 And he of both is the compact effect ;
 Of God and of the lonely universe ;
 The mean immortal he of brutal life,
 And the divine eternity of Heaven ;
 The vital medium of all things. In man
 Do God and Nature reconcile themselves.
 God's image and the world's too is he both.
 In nature moral, intellectual,
 And spiritual of the Former ; in
 This elemental and transitional frame,
 His mighty mother Nature's favourite son.
 The quintessential element of soul,
 Which was a love-gift from His sire to her,
 He doth alone inherit of her fruit ;
 And Nature is in him most perfected,
 The culminating glory of her line.
 As man partakes the quality of all life
 Below him, and all matter e'en inert,
 So, in his nature sanctified, all things
 Back to their final origin return,
 In cyclical totality of life.
 For which cause God, that all might be redeemed,
 Assumed man's nature, and fulfilled it so
 That, though it plunged Him in the abyss of death,
 Death He passed through for us ; and in His train,
 The infinite effluence of His conquering light,
 It is that we enter Heaven. For our dear sakes
 The blessing first was made a curse, the curse
 Transformed at last a blessing ; mortal life,
 By death Divine, is rendered life eterne ;
 And God with justest love still saves from death,
 To Heaven's divinest destinies, the Son
 Of His eternal bridal.

Festus.

Whence are we !

Luniel. Child of the royal blood of man redeemed,

The starry strain of spirit, thence we are.
 This, therefore, be thy future and thy fate.
 As water putrefied and purified,
 Seven times by turns, will never more corrupt ;
 So thou and thine whole race, all change endured,
 Through doubt, sin, knowledge, faith, love, power, and
 bliss,

Shall practise every note of Being's scale,
 Till the whole orb coharmonize with Heaven,
 And pure imperial Peace rule all below ;—
 Till, star by star, these bright and sacred seats,
 Whose ancestry of sempiternal suns
 Comes of the vast and universal void,
 And in whose lineage of light yon earth
 Seems but a new possession, scarcely worth
 Accepting or rejecting, shall at last
 Into primordial nothingness relapse ;
 And man, the universal son of God,
 Who occupied in Time those starry spheres,
 Regenerate and redeemed shall live for aye,
 Made one with Deity ; all evil gone,
 Dispersed as by a thunderclap of light.

Lucifer. Spirit serene ! Hath evil no effect ?

Luniel. Timeous it hath, being the shadow of good
 Imperfect, creatural, which, changed in Christ,
 For God's eternal virtue and divine,
 Substance and shadow perish. Even thus
 With man all good hath evil, but with God
 Evil itself is good.

Festus. And sin and hell ?

Luniel. Evil and sin are twin with Time and man.
 Sin from a selfish sensual source proceeds,
 Surceasing in an individual end ;
 Whereby we stand opposing Deity,
 And the great commonwealth of worldly life ;
 Sin voluntary evil ; evil is
 Nature's involuntary sin 'gainst God,
 Which from life issuing, sanctified by death,
 The Deity unto Deity restores.
 But good, wherein with God we concentrate,
 Though bound on Being's very utmost verge,
 Unites us with the Infinite, and rules
 Right through us, as a radius of the law

Eternal of intelligence which bounds,
 Quickens, upholds, and rectifies all things.
 Sin is the birth of evil ; hell, of sin ;
 Destruction of corruption forms the end.
 Heat is not in the sun, nor wrath in God,
 Who, though our faith may waver, still is Love.
 It is the eye which twinkles, not the star.
 His ire is in ourselves. When Him we spurn
 We suffer : we both suffer and inflict.
 Revenge, wrath, judgment, all are names of Love.
 The crowned effect of being, and therein
 Result. Such retribution is our God's :
 Such glorious retribution as the sun
 Inflicts on fogs and shadows. Hell is part
 Of nature. Human retribution stands
 Divine in ordination ; but Divine
 Judgment on human souls by torturing fires,
 In everlasting blast, a blind reproach
 To the pure God, who blesseth all He makes.

Lucifer. So far as goes Destruction I believe,
 Because I comprehend it possible
 For mercy what it once made to unmake ;
 Not to its opposite remake ; for so,
 Corruption stands regeneration's root.
 Justice is sacred between man and man,
 And mercy certain between man and God,
 Whose equity is holy in the Heavens.
 But between God and fiend no middle power
 Exists, save Man, and no creator he.

Luniel. Thee God ! all creatural nature more or less
 Denies ; but Thou, above all contraries,
 All lovest, all affirmest, as of Thee.

Festus. Yea even here as everywhere, let man
 Worship his Recreator, and the world's,
 Made perfect by preliminary fire.
 O Thou who in the inaccessible depths
 Dwellest of all-central Being, and of whom
 We can but see the star-dust of Thy feet
 Left on Heaven's roads ; from world nathless to world,
 From firmament to firmament, can we trace
 Each soul his individual link with Thee ;
 The pure invisble touch which makes us Thine ;

The something more substantial than the sun,
More general than the void, yet nested here ;
As through the æry silence of the soul,
Swifter than eagle rushing on the wind,
Thou sweepest into possession when Thou wilt.
So many are Thy mercies there is nought
But this to pray for left ; continue that
Thou givest. To cease pertaineth not to Thee.
The elements may all confusedly fail,
And burning systems stiffen or depart
Into their graves of darkness and decay ;
The sun at length, exhausted in the strife,
With his æthereal victor sleep and die ;
And firmaments conglobed them, till at last
The universe concentrate in one orb,
Fit for Thy footstool only ;—change like this
Ten thousand times may happen, till it fall
To the observant spirits at Thy right hand
Noteless by reoccurrence ; man the while,
Restored unto the Essence whence he came,
One with the great ones who have dwelt in him,
Who cannot deal with less than Infinites,
Nor utter what is not divine and true,
Shall ripen in Thy bosom till he grow
Through endless Heavens, triumphant and serene,
Into the thronéd god thou bad'st him be.

Laniel. Depart ! Thou knowest all things, knowing this
The world is God's broad comment on the Word,
Whose margin is Creation, and sense Heaven.
So Time's whole trilogy to thee is one :
The angels are the chorus of the world,
And man the mighty drama of the Lord.
Now spirit is the expiration, soul
The inspiration of the breath of God,
The infinite centre, whose like infinite
Circumference consists of angels, man,
And elemental nature ;—He himself
Apart from, and above all Being still,
In unconceivéd Essence. Be to Him
Therefore all Being hallowed, and devote
Throughout the paradisaal world to come.
Be every hill an altar named to God,

Fire crowned with Heaven-consuming sacrifice ;
 A throne of love, a stone of destiny ;
 Oh, may earth, sea-like, but reflect the skies ;
 Be every flower a censer of delight ;
 And every wing an augury of Heaven.

Lucifer. To me there is no future. I abhor
 The self-delusions men affect. With them
 The future is a god-king born in Heaven,
 Rich with hereditary royalties,
 And entail of interminable times.
 Morn's roseate breath, fresh blown o'er night's bright dew,
 Is foul before this urchin's as a sough ;
 His hand is like the lily's fragrant snow ;
 And he is robed in weeds of whitest sheen,
 Pet godling of the world ! The present,—what ?
 A ragged, beggared dotard, sick to death
 Of the gray years and round returning skies.
 Nor passed nor future is ; the present, all.

Festus. Earth was my future once, but now 'tis Heaven.

Luniel. Earth is the emerald tablet by God's throne,
 Whereon He writes His laws and open fates,
 That all the Heavens His starry rede may learn
 Unto the end. Thither ye therefore hie.

Lucifer. Come then, since Heaven and earth have willed
 it thus,
 Let us fare forth ; our mutual destiny
 Coæval and concurrent with the world.

SCENE—*A large Party and Entertainment.*

FESTUS, HELEN, and OTHERS.

Festus. My Helen ! let us rest awhile,
 For most I love thy calmer smile ;
 We'll not be missed from this gay throng,
 They dance so eagerly and long ;
 And were one half to go away,
 I'll bet the rest would scarce perceive it.

Helen. With thee I either go or stay,
 Prepared, the same, to like or leave it.
 These two, perhaps will, take our places ;
 They seem to stand with longing faces.

Festus. Then sit we, love, and sip with me,

And I will teach thyself to thee.
 Thy nature is so pure and fine,
 'Tis most like wine ;
 Thy blood, which blushes through each vein,
 Rosy champagne ;
 And the fair skin which o'er it grows,
 Bright as its snows.
 Thy wit, which thou dost work so well,
 Is like cool moselle ;
 Like madeira, bright and warm,
 Is thy smile's charm ;
 Claret's glory hath thine eye,
 Or mine must lie ;
 But nought can like thy lips possess
 Deliciousness ;
 And now that thou'rt divinely merry,
 I'll kiss and call thee sparkling sherry.

Helen. I sometimes dream that thou wilt leave me
 Without thy love, even me, lonely ;
 And oft I think, though oft it grieve me,
 That I am not thy one love only :
 But I shall alway love thee till
 This heart like earth in death, stand still.

Festus. I love thee, and will leave thee never,
 Until my soul leave life for ever.
 If earth can from her children run,
 And leave the seasons—leave the sun,—
 If yonder stars can leave the sky,
 Bright truants from their home in Heaven—
 Immortals who deserve to die,
 Were death not too good to be given,—
 If Heaven can leave and live from God,
 And man tread off his cradle clod—
 If God can leave the world He sowed,
 Right in the heart of space to fade—
 Soul, earth, star, Heaven, man, world, and God
 May part—not I from thee, sweet maid.
 Ah, see again my favourite dance,
 See the wavelike line advance ;
 And now in circles break,
 Like raindrops on a lake :

Now it opens, now it closes,
Like a wreath dropping into roses.

Helen. It is a lovely scene,
Fair as aught on earth ;
And we feel, when it hath been,
At heart a dearth ;
As from the breaking up of some bright dream ;
The failing of a fountain's spray-topt stream.

Will. Ladies—your leave—we'll choose a queen
To rule this fair and festive scene.

Charles. And it were best to choose by lot,
So none can hold herself forgot.

[*They draw lots : it falls to Helen.*]

Festus. I knew, my love, how this would be ;
I knew that Fate must favour thee.

All. Lady fair ! we throne thee Queen :
Be thy sway as thou hast been—
Light, and lovely, and serene.

Festus. Here—wear this wreath. No ruder crown
Should deck that dazzling brow ;
Or ask yon halo from the moon—
'Twould well beseem thee now.
I crown thee, love ; I crown thee, love ;
I crown thee queen of me ;
And oh ! but I am a happy land,
And a loyal land to thee.
I crown thee, love ; I crown thee, love ;
Thou art queen in thine own right ;
Feel ! my heart is as full as a town of joy :
Look ! I've crowded mine eyes with light.
I crown thee, love ; I crown thee, love ;
Thou art queen by right divine !
And thy love shall set neither night nor day ;
O'er this subject heart of mine.
I crown thee, love ; I crown thee, love ;
Thou art queen by the right of the strong !
And thou didst but win where thou mightst have slain,
Or have bounden in thralldom long.
I crown thee, love ; I crown thee, love ;
Thou art my queen for aye ;
As the moon doth queen the night, my love ;

As the night doth crown the day ;
 I crown thee, love ; I crown thee, love ;
 Queen of the brave and free !
 For I'm brave to all beauty but thine, my love ;
 And free to all beauty by thee.

Helen. Here, in this court of pleasure, blessed to reign,
 If not the loveliest, where all are fair,
 We still, one hour, our royalty retain,
 To out-queen all in kindness and in care.
 Love, beauty, honour, bravery, and wit ;
 Was ever Queen served by such noble slaves ?
 The peerage of the heart—for Heaven's court fit :
 We'll dream no more that earth hath ills or graves.
 With mirth and melody, and love we reign :
 Begin we, then, our sweet and pleasurable sway ;
 And here, though light, so strong is beauty's chain,
 That none shall know how blindly they obey.
 We have but to lay on one light command ;
 That all shall do the most what best they love ;
 And Pleasure hath her punishments at hand
 For all who will not pleasure's rule approve.
 But no ! there's none of us can disobey,
 Since, by our one command, we free ye thus :
 And, as our powers must on your pleasures stay—
 Support—and you will reign along with us.

Festus. Ha ! Lucifer ! How now ?

Lucifer. I come in sooth to keep my vow.

Festus. Thy vow ?

Lucifer. To revel in earth's pleasures,
 And tire down mirth in her own measures.

Festus. Go thy ways : I shrink and tremble
 To think how deep thou canst dissemble ;
 For who would dream that in yon breast
 The heart of hell was burning ?
 Or deem that strange and listless guest
 Some priceless spirit earning ?
 I hear from every footstep rise
 A trampled spirit's smothered cries.

Lucifer. But for yon jocund wight, I fear,
 —Just in the nick of time we met,
 I stopped, and asked him where you were ;
 His kindness I shall ne'er forget—

Small chance had I of being here.
I think it quite ungenerous in you,
At such gay gathering as the present,
My once-loved converse to eschew,
Just as I meant to make things pleasant.
It's rather hard when one has called
The club, to be yourself black-balled.

Charles. Fest, engage fair Marian's hand.

Festus. Pass me; she is free no less
Than I, who by my queen will stand;
May it please her loveliness!

Helen. Festus, we know the love, and see,
Which was with Marian and thee,
Our early friend, once Clara called,
But now from us long while estranged;
In all, except her hopeless love
For thee, her faithless lover, changed;
And we would see ye once again,
I nothing doubt, resume—

Marian. In vain,
I wish it not. I do but strive,
A love though buried still alive,
To hallow with the dearer name
That sheltered its first flickering flame.
He seeks another. Though he range
From heart to heart, not I shall change.
Love veered unbidden; he yet may learn
Unsought, unsolaced, to return.

Helen. I hold him not against his will;
Thine he may be, thine only still.

Lucifer. Well-rooted plants soon fruit. A lighter love
Will lighter instincts in him move.
These joys, these raptures of mere sense,
Senseless, enjoyment's pure pretence,
Must surely cloud all innocence.
And as he gains in knowledge high
Of spirit, nature, destiny,
Faith, fostered by yon faithful soul,
So ripe in love, so rich in dole,
Faith must as surely in him die.

Festus. I marvel at myself. There seems
A power within me bids me claim

A freedom like space-filling dreams,
Which are, and are not, but in name;
A fateful freedom, all the same;
Wherefrom I vainly try to shape
Some way of conquest or escape.

Lucifer. My schemes succeed as soon as planned;
Needs must, if so and so but drive;
When once you know your neighbour's hand,
It's wondrous how your game will thrive.

Charles. Of freedom we'll have no abuse.
Dance with your royal fair.

Lucifer. Make no excuse.

Festus. Rebellion pleases most, though little use.
I will not dance to night again,
Though bid by all the queens that reign.

Helen. What, Festus! treason and disloyalty
Already to our gentle royalty?

Festus. No—I was wrong—but to forgive
Be thy sublime prerogative!

Helen. Most amply, then, I pardon thee;
In proof whereof, come dance with me. [A dance.

Laurence. How sweetly Marian sweeps along:
Her step is music, and her voice is song.

Silver-sandalled foot! how blest
To bear the breathing Heaven above,
Which on thee, Atlas-like, doth rest,
And round thee move.

Ah! That sweet little foot: I swear
I could kneel down and kiss it there.
I should not mind if she were Pope;
I would change my faith.

Charles. Works, too, we hope.

Laurence. Ah! smile on me again with that sweet
smile,

Which could from Heaven my soul to thee beguile;
As I mine eye would turn from awful skies
To hail the child of sun and storm arise;
Or, from eve's holy azure, to the star
Which beams and becks the spirit from afar;
For fair as yon star-wreath which high doth shine,
And worthy but to deck a brow like thine;
Pure as the light from orbs which ne'er

Hath blessed us yet in this far sphere ;
 As eyes of seraphs lift alone,
 Through ages on the holy throne ;
 So bright, so fair, so free from guile,
 And freshening to my heart thy smile ;
 Ay, passing all things here, and all above,
 To me, thy look of beauty, truth, and love.

Marian. Pray, heed me not. 'Twere vain to me
 To pay thy heart's lost fealty.

Harry. Thy friend hath led his lady out.

Festus. He looks most wickedly devout.

Fanny. When introduced, he said he knew her,
 And had been long devoted to her.

Emma. Indeed—but he is too gallant,
 And serves me far more than I want.
 He vows that he could worship me—
 Why—look ! he is now upon his knee !

Lucifer. I quaff to thee this cup of wine,
 And would, though men had nought but brine—
 E'en the brine of their own tears,
 To cool those lying lips of theirs ;
 And were it all one molten pearl,
 I would drain it to thee, girl ;
 Ay, though each drop were worth of gold
 Too many pieces to be sold ;
 And though for each I drank to thee,
 Fate add an age of misery :
 For thou canst conjure up my spirit
 To aught immortals may inherit ;
 To good or evil, woe or weal—
 To all that fiends or angels feel ;
 And wert thou to perdition given,
 I'd join thee in the scorn of Heaven !

Emma. Oh fy ! to only think of such a fate !

Lucifer. Better than not to think on't till too late.
 They'd not believe me, Festus, if I told them,
 That hell, and all its hosts, this hour behold them.

Festus. Scarcely—that Demon here again !
 But though my heart burst in the strain
 I will be happy might and main !
 So wreathe my brow with flowers,
 And pour me purple wine,

And make the merry hours
Dance, dance with glee like thine.
While thus enraptured, I and thou,
Love crowns the heart, as flowers the brow.
The rosy garland twine
Around the noble bowl,
Like laughing loves that shine
Upon the generous soul;
Be mine, dear maid, the loves, and thou
Shalt ever bosom them as now.
Then plunge the blushing wreath
Deep in the ruddy wine;
As the love of thee till death
Is deep in heart of mine;
While both are blooming on my brow
I cannot be more blessed than now.

Lucifer. Thou talkst of hearts in style to me quite fresh :
The human heart's about a pound of flesh.

Festus. Forgive him, love, and aught he says.

Helen. What is that trickling down thy face?

Festus. Oh, love, that is only wine,
From the wreath which thou didst twine;
And, casting in the bowl, I bound,
For coolness' sake, my temples round.

Helen. I thought 'twas a thorn which was tearing thy
brow;

And if it were only a rose-thorn was tearing,
Why, whether of gold or of roses, as now,
A crown, if it hurts us, is hardly worth wearing.

Lucy. From what fair maid hadst thou that flower?
It came not from my wreath nor me.

Charles. Love lives in thee as in a bower,
And sure this must have dropped from thee;
From thy lip, or from thy cheek :
See, its sister blushes speak.

Nay, never harm the harmless rose,
Though given by a stranger maid;
'Tis sad enough to feel that flower
Feels it must fade.

And trouble not the transient love,
Though by another's side I sigh;
It is enough to feel the flame

Flicker and die.

And thou to me art flame and flower,
Of rosier body, brighter breath ;
But softer, warmer than the truth—
As sleep than death.

Festus. The dead of night : earth seems but seeming—
The soul seems but a something dreaming.
The bird is dreaming in its nest,
Of song, and sky, and loved one's breast ;
The lap-dog dreams, as round he lies,
In moonshine, of his mistress' eyes :
The steed is dreaming, in his stall,
Of one long breathless leap and fall :
The hawk hath dreamt him thrice of wings
Wide as the skies he may not cleave ;
But waking, feels them clipt, and clings
Mad to the perch 'twere mad to leave :
The child is dreaming of its toys—
The murderer of calm home joys ;
The weak are dreaming endless fears—
The proud of how their pride appears :
The poor enthusiast who dies,
Of his life-dreams the sacrifice,
Sees, as enthusiast only can,
The truth that made him more than man ;
And hears once more, in visioned trance,
That voice commanding to advance,
Where wealth is gained—love, wisdom won,
Or deeds of danger dared and done.
The mother dreameth of her child—
The maid of him who hath beguiled—
The youth of her he loves too well ;
The good of God—the ill of hell,—
Who live of death—of life who die—
The dead of immortality.
The earth is dreaming back her youth ;
Hell never dreams, for woe is truth ;
And Heaven is dreaming o'er her prime,
Long ere the morning stars of time ;
And dream of Heaven alone can I,
My lovely one, when thou art nigh.

Helen. Let some one sing. Love, mirth, and song,

The graces of this life of ours,
Go ever hand in hand along,
And ask alike each other's powers.

Lucy sings. For every leaf the loveliest flower
Which beauty sighs for from her bower—
For every star a drop of dew—
For every sun a sky of blue—
For every heart a heart as true.

For every tear by pity shed
Upon a fellow-sufferer's head,
Oh! be a crown of glory given;
Such crowns as saints to gain have striven—
Such crowns as seraphs wear in Heaven.

For all who toil at honest fame,
A proud, a pure, a deathless name;
For all who love, who loving bless,
Be life one long, kind, close caress—
Be life all love, all happiness.

Will. How can we better time employ,
Than celebrate, with every breath,
Through hours that laugh themselves to death,
This bridal feast of love and joy?

Festus. That song reminds me,—but it may not be;
No! I am sailing on another sea.

Lucifer. Tell me what's the chiefest pleasure
In this world's high heap'd measure!

All. Power—beauty—love—wealth—wine!

Lucifer. All different votes!

Fanny. Come, Frederic—thine?

What may thy joy-judgment be?

Frederic. I scarce know how to answer thee;
Each, apart, too soon will tire;
Altogether slake desire.

So ask not of me the one chief joy of earth,
For that I'm unable to say;
But here is a wreath which will lose its chief worth,
If ye pluck but one flower away.
Then these are the joys which should never dispart—
The joys which are dearest to me:
As the song, and the dance, and the laugh of the heart,
Thou, girl, and the goblet, be.

Lucifer. Oh, excellent! the truth is clear;
The one opinion, too, I love to hear.

Helen. Is this a queen's fate—to be left alone?
I wish another had the throne.

Festus! why art thou not here,
Beside thy liege and lady dear?

Festus. My thoughts are happier oft than I,
For they are ever, love, with thee;
And thine, I know, as frequent fly
O'er all that severs us, to me:
Like rays of stars that meet in space,
And mingle in a bright embrace.
Never load thy locks with flowers,
For thy cheek hath a richer flush;
And than wine, or the sunset hour,
Or the ripe yew-berry's blush.
Never braid thy brow with lights,
Like the sun, on his golden way
To the neck and the locks of night,
From the forehead fair of day.
Never star thy hand with stones,
For, for every dead light there,
Is a living glory gone,
Than the brilliant far more fair.
Nay, nay; wear thy buds, braids, gems!
Let the lovely never part;
Thou alone canst rival them,
Or in nature, or in art.
Be not sad;—thou shalt not be:
Why wilt mourn, love, when with me?
One tear that in thy eye could start
Could wash all purpose from my heart
But that of loving thee;
If I could ever think to wrong
A love so riverlike, deep, pure, and long.

Helen. I cast mine eyes around, and feel
There is a blessing wanting;
Too soon our hearts the truth reveal,
That joy is disenchanting.

Festus. I am a wizard, love; and I
A new enchantment will supply;
And the charm of thine own smile
Shall thine own heart of grief beguile.
Smile—I do command thee, rise

From the bright depths of those eyes!
By the bloom wherein thou dwellest,
As in a rose-leaved nest;
By the pleasure which thou tellest,
And the bosom which thou swellest,
I bid thee rise from rest;
By the rapture which thou causest,
And the bliss while e'er thou pausest,
Obey my high behest.

Helen. Dread magician! cease thy spell;
It hath wrought both quick and well.

Festus. Ah! thou hast dissolved the charm;
Ah! thou hast outstepped the ring;
Who shall answer for the harm
Beauty on herself will bring?
Come, I will conjure up again that smile—
The scarce departed spirit. There it is!
Settling and hovering round thy lips the while,
Like some bright angel o'er the gates of bliss.
And I could sit and set that rose-bright smile,
Until it seem to grow immortal there—
A something abstract even of all beauty,
As though 'twere in the eye or in the air.
Ah! never may a heavier shadow rest
Than thine own ringlets' on that brow so fair;
Nor sob, nor sorrow, shake the perfect breast
Which looks for love, as doth for death despair.
And now the smile, the sigh, the blush, the tear—
Lo! all the elements of love are here.
Oh, weep not—wither not the soul
Made saturate with bliss;
I would not have one briny tear
Embitter beauty's kiss.
Nay, weep not, fear not! woe nor wrath
Can touch a soul like thine,
More than the lightning's blinding path
May strike the stars divine.
Sing, then, while thy lover sips,
And hear the truth that wine discloses;
Music lives within thy lips
Like a nightingale in roses.

Helen sings. Oh ! love is like the rose,
And a month it may not see,
Ere it withers where it grows—
Rosalie !

I loved thee from afar ;
Oh ! my heart was lift to thee,
Like a glass up to a star—
Rosalie !

Thine eye was glassed in mine
As the moon is in the sea,
And its shine was on the brine—
Rosalie !

The rose hath lost its red,
And the star is in the sea,
And the briny tear is shed—
Rosalie !

Festus. What the stars are to the night, my love,
What its pearls are to the sea,—
What the dew is to the day, my love,
Thy beauty is to me.

Helen. I am but here the under-queen of beauty,
For yonder hangs the likeness of the goddess ;
And so to worship her is our first duty.
The heavenly minds of old first taught the heavenly bodies
Were to be worshipped ; and the idolatry
Holds to this hour ; though, Beauty ! but of thine.
I am thy priestess, and will worship thee,
With all this brave and lovely train of mine ;
Lo ! we all kneel to thee before thy pictured shrine.
Yes—there, thou goddess of the heart,
Immortal beauty, there !
Thou glory of Jove's free-love skies,
E'en like thyself too fair,
Too bright, too sweet for mortal eyes,
For earthly hearts too strong ;
Thy golden girdle liftst and drawest
The heavens and earth along.
Oh ! thou art as the cloudless moon,
Undimmed and unarrayed ;
No robe hast thou, no crown save yon—
Goddess ! thy long locks' soft and sunbright braid.
And there's thy son, Love—beauty's child—
World known for strangest powers—

Boy-god ! thy place is blest o'er all ;
Smil'st thou at thoughts of ours ?
And there, by thy luxurious side,
The queen of Heaven and Jove
Stands ; and the deep delirious draught
Drinks, from thy looks, of love,
And lips, which oft have kissed away
The thunders from his brow,
Who ruled, men say, the world of worlds,
As God our God rules now.
And thou art yet as great o'er this
As erst o'er olden sky ;
Of all Heaven's darkened deities
The last live light on high.
God after god hath left thee lone,
Which lived on human breath ;
When prayers were breathed to them no more,
The false ones pined to death.
But in the service of young hearts
To loveliness and love,
Live thou shalt while yon wandering world,
Named unto thee, shall move.
No fabled dream art thou : all god,
Our souls acknowledge thee ;
For what would life from love be worth,
Or love from beauty be ?
Come, universal beauty, then,
Thou apple of God's eye,
To and through which all things were made—
Things deathless—things that die.
Oh ! lighten—live before us there—
Leap in yon lovely form,
And give a soul. She comes ! It breathes—
So bright—so sweet—so warm.
Our sacrifice is over ; let us rise ;
For we have worshipped acceptably here ;
And let our glowing hearts and glimmering eyes,
O'erstrained with gazing on thy light too near,
Prove that our worship, Goddess, was sincere.
Festus. I read that we are answered. The soft air
Doubles its sweetness ; and the fainting flowers,
Down hanging on the walls in wreaths so fair,

Bud forth afresh, as in their birth-day bowers.
Dew-laden, as oppressed with love and shame,
The rose-bud drops upon the lily's breast ;
Brighter the wine, the lamps have softer flame ;
Thy kiss flows freelier than the grape first pressed.

Will. A dance, a dance !

Helen. Let us remain.

Festus. We will not tempt your sport again.

Helen. Behold where Marian sits alone,
The dance all sweeping round,
Like to some goddess hewn in stone,
With blooming garlands bound.

Festus. Tell me, Marian, what those eyes
Can discover in the skies,
Whereon thou gazest with such ecstasies ?

Marian. For earth my soul hath lost all love,
But Heaven still loves and watches o'er me ;
Why should I not, then, look above,
And pass, and pity all before me ?

Festus. Oh ! if yon worlds that shine o'er this.
Have more of joy—of passion less—
I would not change earth's chequered bliss
For thrice the joys those orbs possess ;
Which seems so strange their nature is
Faint with excess of happiness.

Marian. Thy heart with others hath its rest,
And it shall wake with me ;
And if within another breast
Thy heart hath made itself a nest,
Mine is no more for thee.
Heart-breaker, go ! I cannot choose
But love thee, and thy love refuse ;
And if my brow grow lined while young,
And youth fly cheated from my cheek,
'Tis that there lies below my tongue
A word I will not speak :
For I would rather die than deem
Thou art not the glory thou didst seem.
But if engirt by flood or fire,
Who would live that could expire ?
Who would not dream, and dreaming die,
If to wake were misery ?

Festus. Whose woes are like to my woes? What is madness?

The mind exalted to a sense of ill
 Soon sinks beyond it into utter sadness,
 And sees its grief before it like a hill.
 Oh! I have suffered till my brain became
 Distinct with woe, as is the skeleton leaf
 Whose green hath fretted off its fibrous frame,
 And bare to our immortality of grief.
 Deep in my heart there lies, as in Truth's well,
 The image of thy soul;
 But ah! that fountain once so sweet, by spell
 Of power is sealed, beyond my will's control.

Marian. Like the light line that laughter leaves
 One moment on a bright young brow,
 So truth is lost ere love believes
 There can be aught save truth below.

Festus. But as the eye aye brightlier beams
 For every fall the lid lets on it,
 So oft the fond heart happier dreams
 For the soft cheats love puts upon it.

Marian. I never dreamed of wretchedness;
 I thought to love meant but to bless.

Festus. It once was bliss to me to watch
 Thy passing smile, and sit and catch
 The sweet contagion of thy breath—
 For love is catching—from such teeth;
 Delicate little pearl-white wedges,
 All transparent at the edges.

Marian. False flatterer, cease.

Festus. It is my fate
 To love, and make who love me hate.

Marian. No! 'tis to sue—to gain—deceive—
 To tire of—to neglect—and leave:
 The desolation of the soul
 Is what I feel—

A sense of lostness that leaves death
 But little to reveal;
 For death is nothing but the thought
 Of something being again nought.

Helen. Cease, lady, cease those aching sighs,
 Which shake the tear-drops from thine eyes,

As morning wind, with wing fresh wet,
Shakes dew out of the violet.

Forgive me if the love once thine
Hath changed itself unsought to me ;
I did not tempt it from thy heart,
I planned no treason against thee ;
And soon, perchance, 'twill be my part,
As thou now art, to be.

Marian. I blame no heart, no love, no fate ;
And I have nothing to forgive :
I wish for nought, repent of nought,
Regret nought but to live.

Helen. Nay, sing ; it will relieve thy heart.

Marian. I cannot sing a mirthful strain ;
And feel too much to act my part,
E'en of an ebbing vein.

Festus. Our hearts are not in our own hands ;
Why wilt thou make me say
I cannot love as once I loved ?

Marian. Hear !—'tis for this I stay—
To say we part—for ever part ;
But oh ! how wide the line
Between thy Marian's bursting heart
And that proud heart of thine.
And thou wilt wander here and there,
Ever the gay and free ;
To other maids wilt fondly swear,
As thou hast sworn to me ;
And I—oh ! I shall but retire
Into my grief alone ;
And kindle there the hidden fire,
That burns, that wastes unknown.
And love and life shall find their tomb
In that sepulchral flame :—
Be happy—none shall know for whom—
I will not dream thy name.

Festus. As sings the swan with parting breath,
So I to thee ;
While love is leaving—worse than life—
Forewarningly.
Speak not, nor think thou any ill of me,
The son of destiny, the crown of fate,

The pen of power which writes earth's future state,
 If thou wouldst not die soon, and wretchedly
 Oppressed with sense of passed felicity;
 Which yet perchance may dawn again on thee.
 Behold me bound beneath the threefold spell,
 Which Heaven hath laid upon me, earth and hell;
 My life, one vast eternal miracle.
 It may be that I love thee even now,
 More than my tortured spirit dare avow;
 It may be that the clouds which dim my gaze,
 Though rich with roseate gold, are full of scath,
 And may disperse neath thy soul's purer rays;
 But now I cannot waver on my path,
 Though faithless heart wreak on itself its wrath;
 Nor condescend the world to undeceive,
 Which doth delight in error and believe.
 Time will unfold whate'er we have of truth,
 As ripening years the greener growth of youth.
 Thus then, farewell, dear maiden, ere I go;
 Thus dearly have I earned my lightest woe.

Oh! if we e'er have loved, lady,
 We must forego it now;
 Though sore the heart be moved, lady,
 When bound to break its vow.
 I'll always think on thee,
 And thou sometimes—on whom, lady?
 And yet those thoughts must be
 Like flowers flung on the tomb, lady.
 Then think that I am blest, lady,
 Though aye for thee I sigh;
 In peace and beauty rest, lady,
 Nor mourn and mourn as I.

From one we love to part, lady,
 Is harder than to die;
 I see it by thy heart, lady,
 I feel it by thine eye.
 Thy lightest look can tell
 Thy heaviest thought to me, lady;
 Oh! I have loved thee well,
 But well seems ill with thee, lady;
 Though sore the heart be moved, lady,
 When bound to break its vow,
 Yet if we ever loved, lady,
 We must forego it now.

Marian. Whate'er thou dost, where'er thou goest,
My heart is only thine, thou knowest.

Lucifer. Come, I must separate you two :
Such wretchedness will never do.
The little cloud of grief which just appears,
If left to spread, will drown us all in tears.

Emma. Oblige us, pray, then, with a song.

Charles. I am sure he has a singing face.

Will. At church I heard him loud and long.

Lucifer. Pardon—but you are doubly wrong.

Helen. Obey, I beg. Here—give him place.

Lucifer. I have not sung for ages, mind :

So you must take me as you find.

This is a song supposed of one—

A fallen spirit—name unknown—

Fettered upon his fiery throne—

Calling on his once angel-love,

Who still remaineth true above.

Thou hast more music in thy voice

Than to the spheres is given,

And more temptations on thy lips

Than lost the angels Heaven.

Thou hast more brightness in thine eyes

Than all the stars which burn,

More dazzling art thou than the throne

We fallen dared to spurn.

Go search through Heaven—the sweetest smile

That lightens there is thine ;

And through hell's burning darkness breaks

No frown so fell as mine.

One smile—'twill light, one tear—'twill cool ;

These will be more to me

Than all the wealth of all the worlds,

Or boundless power could be.

Helen. Entreat him, pray, to sing again.

Lucifer. Any thing any one desires.

Festus. Your loveliness hath but to deign
To will, and he'll do all that will requires.

Lucifer sings. Oh ! many a cloud
Hath lift its wing ;
And many a leaf
Hath clad the spring ;

But there shall be thrice
The leaf and cloud;
And thrice shall the world
Have worn her shroud;
Ere there's any like thee,
But where thou wilt be.

Oh! many a storm
Hath drenched the sun;
And many a stream
To sea hath run;
But there shall be thrice
The storm and stream,
Ere there's any like thee,
But in angel's dream;
Or in look, or in love,
But in Heaven above.

Lucy. What is love? Oh! I wonder so:
Do tell me—who pretends to know?

Frank. Ask not of me, love, what is love!
Ask what is good of God above;
Ask of the great sun what is light;
Ask what is darkness of the night;
Ask sin of what may be forgiven;
Ask what is happiness of Heaven;
Ask what is folly of the crowd;
Ask what is fashion of the shroud;
Ask what is sweetness of thy kiss;
Ask of thyself what beauty is;
And, if they each should answer, I!
Let me, too, join them with a sigh.
Oh! let me pray my life may prove,
When thus, with thee, that I am love.

Festus. I cannot love as I have loved,
And yet I know not why;
It is the one great woe of life
To feel all feeling die:
And one by one the heartstrings snap
As age comes on so chill;
And hope seems left that hope may cease,
And all will soon be still.
And the strong passions, like to storms,
Soon rage themselves to rest;
Or leave a desolated calm,
A worn and wasted breast;

A heart that like the Geyser spring,
Amidst its bosomed snows,
May shrink, not rest—but with its blood
Boils even in repose.
And yet the things one might have loved
Remain as they have been ;
Truth ever lovely, and one heart
Still sacred and serene ;
But lower, less, and grosser things
Eclipse the world-like mind,
And leave their cold dark shadow where
Most to the light inclined.
And then it ends as it began,
The orbit of our race,
In pains and tears, and fears of life,
And the new dwelling place.
From life to death, from death to life,
We hurry round to God ;
And leave behind us nothing but
The path that we have trod.

Helen. In vain I try to lure thy heart
From grief to mirth ;
It were as easy to ward off
Night from the earth.

Festus. Fill ! I'll drink it till I die—
Helen's lip and Helen's eye !
An eye which outsparkles
The beads of the wine,
With a hue which outdarkles
The deeps where they shine.
Come ! with that lightly flushing brow,
And darkly splendid eye,
And white and wavy arms which now,
Like snow-wreaths on the dark brown bough,
So softly on me lie.
Come ! let us love, while love we may,
Ere youth's bright sands be run ;
The hour is nigh when every soul,
Which 'scapeth evil's dread control,
Nor drains the furies' fiery bowl,
Shall into Heaven for aye,
And love its God alone.

Helen. Now let me leave my throne; and if the hours
Have measured every moment by a kiss,
As I do think, since first ye gave these flowers,
It was to teach us how to dial bliss.
Farewell, dear crown, thy mistress will not wear,
Save when she sitteth royally alone.
Farewell, too, throne! not quickly wilt thou bear
A happier form, if fairer than mine own.

Will. The ladies leave us!

Lucifer. Oh! by all means let them;
But say, for Heaven itself, we'll not forget them;
Say we will pledge them to the top of breath,
As loud as thunder, and as deep as death.

Festus (apart). Where is thy grave, my love?
I want to weep.

High as thou art this earth above
My woe is deep;
And my heart is cold as is thy grave,
Where I can neither soothe nor save.
Whate'er I say, or do, or see,
I think and feel alone to thee.
Oh! can it—can it be forgiven,
That I forget thou art in Heaven?
Thou wilt forgive me this, and more:
Love spends his all, and still hath store.
Thou wilt forgive, if beauty's wile
Should win, perforce, one glance from me;
When they whose art it is to smile
Can never smile my heart from thee;
And if with them I chance to be,
And give mine ear up to their singing,
It, wind-like, only wakes the sea,
In all its mad monotony,
Of memory forth thy music ringing.
Thou wilt forgive, if, now and then,
I link with hands less loved than thine,
Whose gold-like touch makes kings of men,
But wakes no will in blood of mine;
And if with them I toss the wine,
And set my soul in love's ripe riot,
It echoes not—this desert shrine,
Where still thy love from Heaven doth shine,

Moon-like, across some ruin's quiet.
Thou wilt forgive me, if my feet
Should move to music with the fair;
When, at each turn, I burn to meet
Thy stream-like step and æry air;
And if before some beauty there,
Mine eye may forge one glance of gladness,
It is but the ripple of despair
That shews the bed is all but bare,
And nought scarce left but stony sadness.
Thou wilt forgive, if e'er my heart
Err from the orbit of its love;
When even the bliss-bright stars will start
Earthwards, some lower sphere to prove.
And if these lips but rarely pine
In the pale abstinence of sorrow,
It is, that nightly I divine,
As I this world-sick soul recline,
I shall be with thee ere the morrow.
Thou wilt forgive, if once with thee
I limned the outline of a Heaven;
But go and tell our God, from me,
He must forgive what He hath given;
And if we be by passion driven
To love, and all its natural madness,
Tell Him that man by love hath thriven,
And that by love he shall be shriven;
For God is love where love is gladness.
Thou wilt forgive, if elay-bound mind
Can scarce discover that thou art;
But wait! I feel the outward wind
Rush fresh into my fluttering heart.
Perchance thy spirit still stays in yon mild star,
In peace and flame-like purity, and prayer;
And, oh! when mine shall fly from earth afar,
I will pray God that it may join thine there;
'Twere doubling Heaven, that Heaven with thee to share.
And while thou ledest music and her lyre,
Like a sunbeam holden by its golden hair,
May I, too, mingling with the immortal choir,
Love thee, and worship God! what more may soul de-
sire?

Enough for me ; but if there be
More it shall be left for thee.

Walter. If any thing I love in chief
It is that flowery rich relief
That wine doth chase on mortal metal
Before good wine begins to settle ;
But all seem smilingly, serenely dull,
And melancholy as the moon at full.
Quenched by their company they seem
Like sparks of fire in clouds of steam.

Charles. They who mourn the lack of wit
Shew, at least, no more of it.

Festus. I cannot bear to be alone,
I hate to mix with men ;
To me there's torture in the tone
Which bids me talk again.
Like silly nestlings, warned in vain,
My heart's young joys have flown ;
While singing to them, even then,
They left me, one by one.
I envy every soul that dies
Out of this world of care ;
I envy e'en the lifeless skies,
That they inshrine thee there ;
And would I were the bright blue air
Which doth insphere thine eyes,
That thou mightest meet me everywhere,
And feel these faithful sighs.
E'en as the bubble that is mixed
Of air and wine right red,
So my heart's love is shared betwixt
The living and the dead.
If on her breast I lay my head,
My heart on thine is fixed :—
Wilt thou I loose, as I have said,
Or keep the soul thou seek'st ?
From me thou canst not pass away
While I have soul or sight ;
I see thee on my waking way,
And in my dreams thee bright ;
I see thee in the dead of night,
And the full life of day ;

I know thee by a sudden light;
It is thy soul, I say.
If yonder stars be filled with forms
Of breathing clay like ours,
Perchance the space that spreads between
Is for a spirit's powers;
And loving as we two have loved,
In spirit and in heart,
Whether to space or star removed,
God will not bid us part.

Frank. As to this seat—its late and fair possessor
Should, ere she went, have chosen her successor.

Festus. In right of her who sat thereon
I think I might demand the throne;
I rather choose to let it be.

All. George shall be king of the company!

George. My loving subjects! I shall first promulge
A few good rules by which to indulge;
They are good, according to my thinking,
And shall be held the laws of drinking.
First—each man shall do what he chooses,
Provided that he ne'er refuses,
But shall be sworn, by stand and stopper,
To drink as much as I think proper.

Will. Stay!—all of you who think with me,
This law should pass,
Will please to signify the same
By emptying their glass.

Walter. Filling again and emptying, and so on,
At each law—*pari passu*, as we go on.

George. Secondly—no man shall be held as mellow
Who can distinguish blue from yellow.
Thirdly—no man shall miss his turn or toast;
Nor yet give more than two at once, at most.
Fourthly—if one at table should fall under,
There let him lie—so much extinguished thunder.
Fifthly—let all, in such case, who still stay,
Like living lightnings, but the brighter play.
Sixthly, and last but one—mind this, there shan't
Be aught said that is not irrelevant.
Seventhly—if any of these edicts should not
Be kept, it shall be good to plead, I would not.

Charles. Oh, let the royal law
Be writ in rosy wine!
And read and kept
At every feast
Where wit and mirth combine.

Festus. How sweetly shine the steadfast stars,
Each eyeing, sister-like, the earth:
And softly chiding scenes like this,
Of senseless and profaning mirth.

Lucifer. Thou art ever prating of the stars,
Like an old soldier of his scars:
Thou shouldst have been a starling, friend,
And not an earthling: end!

Festus. And could I speak as many times
Of each as there are stars in Heaven,
I could not utter half the thoughts—
The sweet thoughts one to me hath given.
The holy quiet of the skies
May waken well the blush of shame,
Whene'er we think that thither lies
The Heaven we heed not—ought not name.
Oh, Heaven! let down thy cloudy lids,
And close thy thousand eyes;
For each, in burning glances, bids
The wicked fool be wise.

Lucifer. I can interpret well the stars.

Charles. Indeed, they need interpreters;
And once, myself, I own, desired
To cast their meanings into verse;
But found the feelings so inspired,
Inapt, as sunshine on a hearse:
And you no doubt will find it worse.

Lucifer. Then thus, in their eternal tongue,
And musical thunders, all have sung,
To every ear which ear hath given,
From birth to death, this note of Heaven:
Deathlings! on earth drink, laugh, and love;
Ye mayn't hereafter—under or above.
Yes, this the tale they all have told,
Since first they made old Chaos shrink;
Since first they flocked creation's fold,
And filled all air like flakes of gold

Which drop yon royal drink.
 For as the moon doth madmen rule,
 It is, that near and few they are;
 And so in Heaven each single star
 Doth sway some reasonable fool,
 Whether on earth or other sphere;
 For what's above is what is here.
 Moons and madmen only change;
 What can truth or stars derange?

Edward. Brave stars, bright monitors of joy!
 Right well ye time your hours of warning;
 For, sooth to say, the eve's employ
 Doth wax less lovely towards the morning.
 So push the goblet gaily round—
 Drink deep of its wealth—drink on!
 Our earthly joy too soon doth cloy,
 Our life is all but gone;
 And, not enjoy yon glorious cup,
 And all the sweets which lie,
 Like pearls within its purple well—
 Who would not hate to die?

Will. And who, without the cheering glance
 Of woman's witching eye,
 Could stand against the storms of fate;
 Or cankering care defy?
 It adds fresh brightness to the bowl;
 Then why will men repine?
 Content we'll live with Heaven's best gifts—
 With women, and with wine:

Harry. Cups while they sparkle,
 Maids while they sigh;
 Bright eyes will darkle;
 Lips grow dry.
 Cheek while the dew-drops
 Water its rose;
 Life's fount hath few drops
 Dear as those.
 Arms while they tighten;
 Hearts as they heave;
 Love cannot brighten
 Life's dark eve.

George. Oh! the wine is like life;

And the sparkles that play,
 By the lips of the bowl,
 Are the loves of the day.
 Then kiss the bright bubble
 That breaks in its rise;
 Oh! love is a trouble
 As light when it dies.

Festus. Well might the thoughtful race of old
 With ivy twine the head
 Of him they hailed their god of wine;
 Thank God! the lie is dead;
 For ivy climbs the crumbling hall
 To decorate decay;
 And spreads its dark deceitful pall
 To hide what wastes away.
 And wine will circle round the brain
 As ivy o'er the brow,
 Till what could once see far as stars
 Is dark as Death's eye now.
 Then dash the cup down! 'tis not worth
 A soul's great sacrifice:
 The wine will sink into the earth;
 The soul, the soul—must rise.

Charles. A toast!

Frederic. Here's beauty's fairest flower—
 The maiden of our own birth-land!

Harry. Pale face!—oh for one happy hour
 To hold my splendid Spaniard's hand!

Festus. Why differ on which is the fairest form,
 When all are the same the heart to warm?
 Although by different charms they strike,
 Their power is equal and alike.
 Ye bigots of beauty! behold I stand forth,
 And drink to the lovely all over the earth.
 Come, fill to the girl by the Tagus' waves!
 Wherever she lives there's a land of slaves.
 And here's to the Scot! with her deep blue eye,
 Like the far-off lochs 'neath her hill-propt sky.
 To her of the green Isle! whose tyrants deform
 The land, where she beams like the bow in the storm.
 To the Norman! so noble, and stately and tall;
 Whose charms, ever changing, can please as they pall:
 Two bowls in a breath! here's to each and to all!

Come, fill to the English ! whose eloquent brow
 Says, pleasure is passing, but coming, and now ;
 Oh ! her eyes o'er the wine are like stars o'er the sea,
 And her face is the face of all Heaven to me.
 And here's to the Spaniard ! that warm blooming maid,
 With her step superb, and her black locks' braid.
 To her of dear Paris ! with soul-spending glance,
 Whose feet, as she's sleeping, look dreaming a dance.
 To the maiden whose lip like a rose-leaf is curled,
 And her eye like the star-flag above it unfurled ;
 Here's to beauty, young beauty, all over the world !

Will. Hurrah ! a glorious toast ;
 'Twould warm a ghost.

Festus. It moves not me. I cannot drink
 The toast I have given.

There !—Earth may pledge it, and she will—
 Herself and her beauty to Heaven.
 Drink to the dead—youth's feelings vain ;
 Drink to the heart—the battered wreck,
 Hurl'd from all passions' stormy main ;
 Though aye the billows o'er it break,
 The ruin rots, nor rides again.

Charles. Friend of my heart ! away with care,
 And sing, and dance, and laugh ;
 To love, and to the favourite fair,
 The wine-cup ever quaff.
 Oh ! drink to the lovely ! whatever they are,
 Though fair as snow—as light ;
 For whether or falling or fixed the star,
 They both are heavenly bright.
 Out upon Care ! he shall not stay
 Within a heart like thine ;
 There's nought in Heaven or earth can weigh
 Down youth, and love, and wine.
 Then drink with the merry ! though we must die,
 Like beauty's tear we'll fall ;
 We have lived in the light of a loved one's eye,
 And to live, love, and die is all.

Festus. Vain is the world and all its boasts ;
 How brief love's, pleasure's, date !
 We turn the bowl and all forget
 The bias of our fate.

George. How goes the enemy ?

Lucifer.

What can he mean ?

Festus. He asks the hour.

Lucifer.

Aha ! then I

Advise, if Time thy foe hath been,
Be quick ! shake hands, man, with Eternity.

SCENE—*A Church-yard.*

FESTUS and LUCIFER beside a Grave.

Festus. Let years crowd on, and age bow down
My body to the earth which gave,
As yon grey, worn-out, crumbling stone
Dips o'er the grave !
What, though for me no music thrill,
Nor mirth delight, nor beauty move ;
Though the heart stiffen and wax still,
And make no love ;
Still, deep and bright, like river gold,
Imbedded here thy love shall lie ;
Sun-grains, that with the sands are rolled,
Of memory.
Shall that soul never burst the tomb,
Draped in long robes of living light ?
Or, worm-like, alway eat the gloom
And dust of night ?

Lucifer. Oh ! life in sporting on earth lies,
Till death share up the rich green sod ;
But if the spirit lives or dies,
Why try ye God ?
What, should it never smile nor sigh
From cheeks or lips but those beneath ?
Doth love not weigh the world's vast lie ?
Doth life not death ?

Festus. I ask why man should suffer death ?

Lucifer. Answer—what right to life hath he ?
God gives and takes away your breath :
What more have ye ?
Breath is your life, and life your soul ;
Ye have it warm from His kind hands :
Then yield it back to the great Whole
When He demands.

Why, deathling, wilt thou long for Heaven?
 Why seek a bright but blinding way?
 Go, thank thy God that He hath given
 Night upon day:
 Go thank thy God that thou hast lived,
 And ask no more: 'tis all He gave:
 'Tis all there needs to be believed—
 God and the grave.

Festus. For Thee, God, will I save my heart
 For Thee my nature's honour keep;
 Then, soul and body, all or part—
 Rest, wake, or sleep!

SCENE—*Space.*

FESTUS and LUCIFER.

Festus. Listen! I hear the harmonies of Heaven,
 From sphere to sphere, and from the boundless round,
 Re-echoing bliss to those serenest heights
 Where angels sit and strike their emulous harps,
 Wreathed round with flowers and diamonded with dew;
 Such dew as gemmed the everduring blooms
 Of Eden winterless, or as, all night,
 The tree of Life wept from its every leaf
 Unwithering. And now methinks I hear
 The music of the murmur of the stream,
 Which through the Bridal City of the Lord
 Floweth all life for ever; and the breath,
 Through the star-shading branches of that Tree
 Transplanted now to Heaven, but once on earth,
 Whose fruit is for all Beings—breathed of God.
 Oh! breathe on me, inspiring spirit-breath!
 Oh! flow to me, ye heart-reviving waves;
 Freshen the faded soul that droops and dies.

Lucifer. The universe is but the gate of Heaven.
 Lo! from this highest orb, the crown of space
 And footstool unto Heaven, we can look up
 And gain a glimpse of glory unconceived.

Festus. See how yon angels stretch their shining arms;
 Wave their star-haunting wings which gleam like glass,
 And locks that look like Morning's when she comes

Triumphant in the East. Is this their joy
O'er some world penitent ?

Lucifer. Lo ! there it rides ;
Blessed to discharge on Heaven's all peaceful shores
Its long accumulated load of life,
Its deathless freight,—pilgrims of time and space.
Yon guilty orb of hesitating light
Slow looming, there, on its dark path, goes up
At the forewritten hour, as do all worlds,
To God, to judgment ; and the earthquake groans,
Which rend its adamant breast, forebode
Its agonizing doom.

Festus. And doth not Heaven
Grieve with the lost as gladden with the saved ?

Lucifer. How may immortals mourn at the decree
Of righteous wisdom, which alone to them
Is bliss sufficient, being infinite ?

Festus. If God hath made all He alone it is
Who hath to answer for all.

Lucifer. He hath made.
To secondary nature it seems just
That justice should be realized ; and there
Is one example extant in the skies.

Festus. But wherefore did it not repent in time ?

Lucifer. What unto us is time, stands before God,
Eternity. Repentance is the grief
For and effectual abstinence from sin ;
Which secondary natures without God
Cannot attain to.

Festus. Cloudy and clear by turns,
Thy words as Heaven. I know not what to think ;
Nor how to act.

Lucifer. It is natural ; and none
Can aim or hit but as appointed them.
There is but one great sinner, human nature,
Prediet of every world and predicate :
The wicked one, the enemy of God,
To be destroyed in the eternal fire
Of His wrath, even thus in Deity—
In whom as they begin must all things end.
God loveth only His own spirit, so
All that is base shall perish. From the first

These things were fixed, and are, and aye shall be,
 Consummating ; and are revealed as writ
 In words always fulfilled, and burning truth,
 Under the buried basements of the skies ;
 Which after overthrown shall reappear.
 The unenlightened mind sees Deity
 In all things ; but the spiritual soul
 All things in God. Now, ere we higher rise,
 Look downwards from this coping of the world ;
 And know that down to the profoundest depth
 Of utter space, where not an atom mars
 The void invisible, it were easier far
 To cast a line and calculate its rate,
 Or pierce all space, nor cross the path of light,
 Than fathom man's dark heart, or sound his soul.

SCENE.—*Heaven.*

LUCIFER and FESTUS, *entering.*

The Archangels. Infinite God ! Thy will is done :
 The world's last sand is all but run :
 The night is feeding on the sun.

Lucifer. All-being God ! I come to Thee again ;
 Nor come alone. Mortality is here.
 Thou badest me do my will, and I have dared
 To do it. I have brought him up to Heaven.

God. Thou canst not do what is not willed to be.
 Suns are made up of atoms, Heaven of souls ;
 And souls and suns are but the atoms of
 The body I, God, dwell in. What wilt thou
 With him who is here with thee ?

Lucifer. Shew him God.

God. No being, upon part of whom the curse
 Of death rests—were it only on his shadow,
 Can look on God and live.

Lucifer. Look, Festus, look !

Festus. Eternal fountain of the Infinite,
 On whose life-tide the stars seem strown like bubbles,
 Forgive me that an atomie of Being
 Hath sought to see its Maker face to face.
 I have seen all Thy works and wonders, passed

From star to star, from space to space, and feel
 That to see all which can be seen is nothing,
 And not to look on Thee the invisible.
 The spirits that I met all seemed to say,
 As on they sped upon their starward course,
 And slackened their lightning wings one moment o'er me,
 I could not look on God whate'er I was.
 And Thou didst give this spirit at my side
 Power to make me more than them immortal.
 So when we had winged through Thy wide world of
 things,
 And seen stars made and saved, destroyed and judged,
 I said—and trembled lest Thou shouldst not hear me,
 And make Thyself right ready to forgive,
 I will see God, before I die, in Heaven.
 Forgive me, Lord !

God. Rise, mortal ! look on me.

Festus. Oh ! I see nothing but like dazzling darkness.

Lucifer. I knew how it would be. I am away.

Festus. I am Thy creature, God ! oh, slay me not ;
 But bid some angel take me, or I die.

Genius. Come hither, Festus.

Festus.

Who art thou ?

Genius:

I am

One who hath aye been by thee from thy birth,
 Thy guardian angel, thy good genius.

Festus. I knew thee not till now.

Genius.

I am never seen

In the earth's low thick light, but here in Heaven,
 And in the air which God breathes, I am clear.

I tell to God each night thy thoughts and deeds :
 And watching o'er thee both on earth and here,
 Pray unto Him for thee and intercede.

Festus. And this is Heaven. Lead on. Will God forgive
 That I did long to see him ?

Genius.

It is the strain

Of all high spirits towards Him. Thou couldst not
 Even if thou wouldst, behold God ; masked in dust,
 Thine eye did light on darkness ; but when dead,
 And the dust shaken off the shining essence,
 God shall glow through thee as through living glass,
 And every thought and atom of thy being

Shall guest His glory, be overbright with God.
 Hadst thou not been by faith immortalized
 For the instant, then thine eye had been thy death.
 Come, I will show thee Heaven and all angels.
 Lo! the recording angel.

Festus. Him I see
 High-seated, and the pen within his hand
 Plumed like a storm-portending cloud which curves
 Half over Heaven, and swift, in use divine,
 As is a warrior's spear!

Genius. The book wherein
 Are writ the records of the universe,
 Lies like a world laid open at his feet.
 And there, the Book of Life which holds the names,
 Formed out in starry brilliants, of God's sons;
 The spirit-names which angels learn by heart,
 Of worlds beforehand. Wilt thou see thine own?

Festus. My name is written in the Book of Life.
 It is enough. That constellated word
 Is more to me and clearer than all stars
 Henceforward and for aye.

Genius. Raise still thine eyes.
 Thy gleaming throne! hewn from that mount of light,
 Which was before created light, or night
 Never created; Heaven's eternal base,
 Whereon God's throne is 'stablished. Sit on it.

Festus. Nay, I will forestall nothing more than sight.

Genius. Turn then and view yon streams where spirits
 sport

Quaffing immortal life, preparing aye
 For higher and intenser Being still.
 These are the upper fountains of the Heavens,
 The emanations of Eternity;
 By washing them wherein they purify
 Their eyes to penetrate the essential light
 In all things hidden, seen alone by eyes
 Fire-spirited, ethereally clear;
 Which like the fabled stone, conceived of fire
 Son of the sun, transmutes all seen to soul.
 And such the bliss and power reserved for man;
 Yet but the surface-shadow canst thou see.
 The substance is to be. Behold yon group

Of spirits blessed ! In their divinest eyes
 The Spirit speaks, and shews that in their own
 All doubt and want hath ceased, as death hath ceased.
 Hither they come, rejoicing, marvelling.

Festus. How all with kindly wonder look on me !
 Mayhap I tell of earth to their pure sense.
 Some seem as if they knew me. I know none.
 But how claim kinship with the glorified
 Unless with them like-glorified ! Yet, yes—
 It is—it must be ;—that angelic spirit !—
 My heart outruns me—mother ! see thy son.

Angel. Child, how art thou here ?

Festus. God hath let me come.

Angel. Hast thou not come unbidden and unprepared ?

Festus. Forgive me, if it be so. I am come.
 And I have ever said there are two who will
 Forgive me aught I do—my God and thou !

Angel. I do—may He !

Festus. Dear mother, thou art blessed ;
 And I am blessed too, in knowing thee.

Angel. Son of my hopes on earth and prayers in
 Heaven !

The love of God ! oh, it is infinite
 Even as our imperfection. Promise, child,
 That thou wilt love Him more and more for this,
 And for His boundless kindness thus towards me.
 Now, my son, hear me ; for the hours of Heaven
 Are not as those of earth ; and all is all
 But lost that is not given unto God.
 Oft have I seen with joy thy thoughts of Heaven ;
 And holy hopes, which track the soul with light,
 Rise from dead doubts within thy troubled breast,
 As souls of drownéd bodies from the sea,
 Upwards to God ; and marked them so received,
 That oh ! my soul hath overflowed with rapture,
 As now thine eye with tears. But O my son
 Belovéd ! fear thou ever for thy soul ;
 It yet hath to be saved. Nought perfect stands
 But that which is in Heaven. God is all-kind ;
 And long time hath He made thee think of Him ;
 Think on Him yet in time. Ere I left earth,
 With the last breath which air would spare for me,

With the last look which light would bless me with,
 I prayed thou mightst be happy and be wise—
 And half the prayer I brought myself to God—
 And lo! thou art unhappy and unwise.

Festus. Blesséd one! I rejoice that thou art clear,
 And all who have cared for me, of my misdeeds.
 Thy spirit was on those who nurtured me.
 All word and practice that could be of good
 Was given me; so that my sin is splendid.
 Yes! if I have sinned, I have sinned sublimely:
 And I am glad I suffer for my faults.
 I would not if I might be bad and happy.

Angel. God laughs at ill by man made and allows it;
 The vaunt of mountainous evil and the power
 To challenge Heaven from a molehill, child!

Festus. God hath made but few better hearts than mine,
 However much it fail in the wise ways
 Of the world, as living in the dull dark streets
 Of forms and follies wherein men build themselves.

Angel. The goodness of the heart is shewn in deeds
 Of peacefulness and kindness. Hand and heart
 Are one thing with the good, as thou shouldst be.
 The splendour of corruption hath no power,
 Nor vital essence; and content in sin
 Shews apathy, not satisfied control.
 Do my words trouble thee? Then treasure them.
 Pain overgot gives peace as death does Heaven.
 All things that speak of Heaven speak of peace.
 Peace hath more might than war. High brows are calm.
 Great thoughts are still as stars; and truths, like suns,
 Stir not: though many systems tend round them.
 Mind's step is still as Death's, and all great things
 Which cannot be controlled, whose end is good.
 Behold yon throne! there, Love, Faith, Hope are one.
 There judgment, righteousness, and mercy make
 One and the same thing. God's salvation is
 His vengeance, His wrath glory; as on earth
 Destruction restoration to the pure.
 Humanity is perfected in Heaven.

Festus. I did not make myself, nor plan my soul.
 I am no angel nursed in the lap of light;
 Nor fed on milk immortal of the stars;

Nor golden fruit grown in the summery suns.
 How am I answerable for my heart?
 It is my master, and is free with me,
 As fixed with fate; even as a star which moves,
 Yet moveth only on a certain course;
 In certain mode: its liberties are laws;
 Its laws tyrannic; I cannot hinder it;
 It cannot hinder God. All that we do
 Or bear is settled from eternity;
 Whereof is no beginning, midst, nor end.
 To act, is ours; quite sure, whate'er we do,
 Whether it be for our own good or ill,
 Or others' ill or good, it is for God's
 Glory—the same and always; it is ordered.
 The soul is but an organ, and it hath
 No power of good and evil in itself,
 More than the eye hath power of light or dark.
 God fitted it for good; and evil is
 Good in another way we are not skilled in.
 The good we do is of His own good will,
 The ill of His own letting. Doth not nature—
 All light in life, shine marsh-like too, in death?
 Yea, wandering fires wait even on rottenness,
 Like a stray gleam of thought in an idiot's brain.
 And thus I look on souls that seem decaying
 In sin, and flying off by elements.
 All may not live again; but all which do,
 Must change perpetually even in Heaven;
 And not by death to death, but life to life.

Angel. No! Step by step, and throne by throne, we rise
 Continually towards the Infinite;
 And ever nearer—never near—to God.

Festus. Yet merit or demerit none I see
 In nature, human or material,
 In passions or affections good or bad.
 We only know that God's best purposes
 Are oftenest brought about by dreadest sins.
 Is thunder evil or is dew divine?
 Does virtue lie in sunshine, sin in storm?
 Is not each natural, each needful, best?
 How know we what is evil from what good?
 Wrath and revenge God claimeth as His own.

And yet men speculate on right and wrong,
 And good and ill as each annihilative
 Of each, like day and night; forgetting both
 Have but one cause, and that the same—God's will;
 Originally, ultimately, Him.
 All right is right divine. A worm hath rights
 A king cannot despoil him of, nor sin;
 Yet wrongs are things necessitate, like wants;
 And oft are well permitted to best ends.
 A double error sometimes sets us right.
 In man there is no rule of right or wrong
 Inherent as mere man. Why, conscience is
 The basest thing of all. Its life is passed
 In justifying and condemning sin;
 Accomplice, traitor, judge, and headsman too.
 But conscience knows its business and performs.
 Nothing is lost in nature; and no soul,
 Though buried in the centre of all sin,
 Is lost to God; but there it works His will,
 And burns conformably. The weakest things
 Are to be made the examples of His might;
 The most defective, of His perfect grace,
 Whene'er He thinketh well. Oh! everything
 To me seems good, and lovely, and immortal!
 The whole is beautiful; and I can see
 Nought wrong in man or nature, nought not meant;
 As from His hands it comes who fashions all,
 All holy as His word. The world is but
 A revelation. He breathes Himself upon us
 Before our birth, as o'er the formless void
 He moved at first, and we are all inspired
 With His spirit. All things are God or of God.
 For the whole world is in the mind of God
 What a thought is in ours. Why boast we then
 Of aught? All that is good belongs to God;
 And good and God are all things, or shall be.

Angel. There lacks in souls like thine unsaved, unraised,
 The light within—the light of perfectness—
 Such as there is in Heaven. The soul hath sunk
 And perished like a light-house in the sea;
 It is for God to raise it and rebuild.

Genius. And his, thy son's, He will raise. Since with me,

I have shewn him infinite wonders : we have oped
 And scanned the golden scroll of Fate, wherein
 Are writ, in God's own hand, all things which happen.
 There we have seen the record of his being—
 His long temptation, sin, and suffering.

Festus. And hear it, O beloved and blessed one !
 Mine own salvation.

Angel. God is great in love ;
 Infinite in his nature, power, and grace ;
 Creating, and redeeming, and destroying—
 Infinite infinitely. But in love—
 Oh ! it is the truth transcendent over all—
 When thus to one poor spirit He gives His hand,
 He seems to impart His own unboundedness
 Of bliss. We seem to be hardly worth destroying,
 And much less saving ; yet He loveth each
 As though all were His equal.

Festus. I know all
 I have to go through henceforth,—all the doubts,
 Passions of life, and woes ; but knowing them
 Hinders them not ; I bear obeyingly ;
 And pine no more, as once when I looked back
 And saw how life had balked, and foiled, and fooled me.
 Fresh as a spouting spring upon the hills,
 My heart leaped out to life : it little thought
 Of all the vile cares that would rill into it,
 And the low places it would have to go through :
 The drains, the crossings, and the mill-work after ;
 God hath endowed me with a soul that scorns life ;
 An element over and above the world's :
 But the price one pays for pride is mountain-high.
 There is a curse beyond the rack of death ;
 A woe, wherein God hath put out his strength ;
 A pain past all the mad wretchedness we feel,
 When the sacred secret hath flown out of us,
 And the heart broken open by deep care ;
 The curse of a high spirit famishing,
 Because all earth but sickens it.

Angel. Go, child !
 Fulfil thy fate. Be—do—bear—and thank God.
 To me it seems as I had lived all ages
 Since I left earth ; and thou art yet scarce man.

Festus. It was not, mother, that I knew thy face ;
 The luminous eclipse that is on it now,
 Though it was fair on earth, would have made it strange
 Even to one who knew as well as he loved thee ;
 And if these time-tired eyes ever imaged thine,
 It was but for a moment, and the sight
 Passed ; and my life was broken like a line
 At the first word—but my heart cried out in me.

Angel. I knew thee well. And now to earth again !
 Go, son ! and say to all who once were mine—
 I love them, and expect them.

Festus. Blesséd one !

I will.

Angel. I charge thee, Genius, bear him safely.

Genius. Through light, and night, and all the powers
 of air,

I have a passport.

Angel. God be with thee, child !

Festus. Where is the spirit which induced me here ?

Genius. That Spirit is no more here ; not for long
 Can he the light sustain which is in Heaven,
 Permitted thee as foretaste to abide.
 Known unto all ye angels is the good
 God hath eternally decreed to man ;
 The secrets of perfection yours alone ;
 Yea, Heaven's high secrets, which the soul of Ill
 Knows not, nor can know ; in the source of light,
 Sightless ; and means for ends misplacing ever,
 Incomprehensive He of his own acts.
 He by fulfilling all desires of life,
 And instigating all the soul's vain aims,
 Misdeems to cause thee lose God, and thyself
 Forfeit to him ; but God, contrariwise,
 Will overrule all to His own great ends,
 In manner none forecasts. But this now know,
 For lo ! it is written in the book of God,
 Where angels learn aforetime what is fate,
 In endless prescience of world-winning love ;
 That, as by angels, man through woman fell,
 By her shall these first fallen again rise ;
 All life, in ultimate perfection linked,
 By Him who chooseth oftentimes meanest means

To compass world-wise purposes ; whereby
 God vindicates himself. Nay, thine own sphere,
 The firstfruits of the great Destruction, earth,
 Born of the mother night of ages once
 Into a sad and struggling life, at last,
 Shall be most blessed hailed among the worlds.
 Come !

Festus. I feel happier, better, nobler now.
 See where she sits and smiles, and points me out
 To those who sit along with her. Who are
 The twain ?

Genius. One is the mother of mankind ;
 And one the mother of the Man who saved
 Mankind ; and she, thine own, the mother of
 The last man of mankind—for thou art he.

Festus. Am I ? It is enough : I have seen God.

Genius. God and His great idea, the universe,
 Are over and above us. Be the one
 Worshipped ; the other reverently proved.
 Wilt sojourn for a time among the worlds,
 And test their natures ?

Festus. Gladly.

Genius. Seek we, then,
 All rareness and variety these worlds
 Can offer, ere we reach thine orb. Descend !
 Now is the age of worlds. Another comes.

God. Angel ! thou knowest mine intent towards man,
 And him who types his race, the crownéd end.
 The elect are saved by faith, the world is judged.
 Him, then, if failing, strengthen to all good.
 If sin-bound, check thou. Give the Evil One
 No cause of triumph. All things are overruled
 To work mine own self-satisfying ends,
 Which are created Being's infinite good
 And everlasting bliss, made one with mine.

Archangels. All are but particles of One Divine,
 And never can in truthful gladness shine,
 Till builded all into one common shrine,
 Which God shall make His temple. As the woo
 Each human heart on earth doth undergo,
 Shall be the calm immeasurable flow
 Of joy, united man in Heaven shall know.

SCENE—*A Garden and Pleasure House.*

MARIAN, HELEN, EDWARD, CHARLES, SOPHIA and OTHERS.

Edward. Again we meet in this fair scene;
Ah! might we be but ever young!

Harry. Helen! We pray thee be again our queen.

Helen. I prithee hold thy tongue:
A royal revolution 'twere, indeed,
That I should twice reign, and myself succeed.

Charles. No nay, no nay! it must be so:
Permit me.

Helen. Well, there needs no shew
Of more reluctance than I feel;
Both kings and queens must court the commonweal.

Harry. A bumper at meeting, a bumper at parting!
As many you like be between;
But we will have a right ruddy brimmer at starting
A health to our beautiful queen!

Long, long may she reign in our hearts and right arms,
And her all but omnipotence last!

She shall fear nothing rougher than love's light alarms;
There is nought in the coming can darken her charms;
There is nought can eclipse in the past.

A brimmer at sitting, a brimmer at starting,
As many you like be between;

But we will have a right ruddy bumper at parting—
A health to our beautiful queen!

Oh! while beauty shall live in the form of the fair,
And love in the heart of the brave,

The queen of our souls, she shall never despair,

For our hearts we would drain, and our deaths we would
dare,

To avenge whom we love, or to save.

Helen. Born to exert the powers of my state,
Charles, I have named thee poet-laureate.

Harry. Kiss hands upon appointment.

Charles.

Sovereign fair!

Behold thy grateful servant.

Helen. Sit thou there,
In all but full equality with me;

Love rules the heart and the mind poesie :
 In youth at least, and when in hours like this,
 The rule is pleasure, the exception bliss.

Laurence. But where is Festus?

Helen.

'Tis to him we owe

The repetition of this scene of joy.
 He bids me say he loves ye all ye know,
 But deems his presence less attraction than annoy.
 Whatever ye can name, and I command,
 Is by his bidding welcome thus to all ;
 But pardon craves ; high quests he hath in hand
 Which wait not on his own nor pleasure's call.
 And though to me his presence be a power,
 His every word with love's bright magic rife,
 Yet he—nor him from that height would I lower—
 Lives in the upper hemisphere of life,
 Where angel thoughts and spiritual orbs
 Roll in the majesty of mind profound ;
 Where Truth's bright disk, all doubt-spots dark absorbs,
 And inspiration's lightning beams abound.
 Whether he e'er return to scenes like this,
 I know not—much I question—but can trace
 The tone, methinks, of that sad soul of his
 Roll ever deepening down an endless bass,
 Like an abyss of thunder. But, away !
 These tears mine eyes have haunted all the day ;
 Now they are vanished. Let us change, I pray,
 The matter of our converse.

Sophia.

Ay, be gay !

Helen. Come, we will consecrate the passing hour,
 With songs of love and lays of beauty's power ;
 For when the tale of Time hath told
 A thousand thousand years,
 His purple pinions starred with gold,
 Wherewith he doth the world enfold,
 Will still be stained with dust, and tears ;
 And still life's sole brief Paradise, in sooth,
 Be love and beauty in the hour of youth.
 A song, a dance, one cup to beauty's name ;
 Music, a jest, or pleasant tale in rhyme ;
 Sufficient these, with mirth and gentle game,
 Alternate with repose, to fill our time.

And first, a dance ! for earth and Heaven
 Are both to choral influence given.
 All things their nature that fulfil,
 In harmlessness and joy, His will
 Worship and do ; though dumb and still ;
 For noteless, countless are the ways
 Of nature practising His praise ;
 And dancing hath a sacred birth
 Like all the happiest customs of the earth.

Charles. The sun in the centre turns solemnly round,
 And the pale god of shades, the conductor of souls,
 Seems to warm as he circles the glory profound,
 Where the goddess of beauty all beamingly rolls ;
 While earth, with her sister, floats brilliantly by,
 Her heart towards the sun, and her love in her eye.
 Then Mars like a warrior gloomy and red
 Impetuous wheels, ever glancing at one ;
 While nine sister goddesses mazily tread,
 In the midst of a nonade each heavenly head,
 The bright fields of air which encircle the sun ;
 And Jove the majestic, serene in his might,
 Sweeps cloudy and thunderous aye to the light.
 Then Saturn, old grey-bearded emblem of time,
 Comes slowly and chilly to join with the rest ;
 And Ouranus next with young Eros sublime,
 Move slowly as though they partook with the blest ;
 And each, his bright bevy of servitors round,
 Complete the vast figure with harmony crowned.

Helen. This, Sir, is your inaugural ode ?

Charles. If you fair lady think it so.
 Your word imposes the sole code
 Of law, or justice, we may know.

Helen. Then my authority is absolute.

Edward. As truth's my liege.

Helen. We'll soon see if it suit.
 So like the stars which circle through the skies,
 As Charles hath sung,
 Let us too dance with choral harmonies
 Ourselves among.

Marian, apart. Again that name hath knelled upon
 mine ear,
 Though I have never voiced it. 'Tis to me

Too deeply, yea unutterably dear.
How warmly too she loves him ! Let it be.
Who most enjoy the light may best endure,
When come, the darkness ; as it now is here.
Whatever his, may my troth-plight keep sure !
I have turned to thee, moon, from the glance
That in triumphing coldness was given ;
And rejoiced, as I viewed thee all lonely advance,
There was something was lonely in Heaven.
I have turned to thee, moon, as I lay
In thy silent and saddening brightness ;
And rejoiced, as high Heaven went shining away,
That the heart had its desolate lightness.
I have turned to thee, moon, from my love,
And from all that once blessed me, in sadness ;
And can marvel no more that, abandoned above,
Thou should'st lend thy bright face to make madness.
I have turned to thee, moon, from my heart,
That in love hath longed laboured and sorrowed ;
And have hoped it might mix, as I watched thee depart,
Like thyself, with the morn which had morrowed.

Laurence. Can I behold the lady of my love
Mourning alone, from pleasure all apart ?

Again I seek thee, though it be to hear
The sentence of destruction to my heart.
Yet if it be so, still one moment stay ;
For it so haps whene'er I think of thee,
So blent is thought with love's anxiety,
My spirit doth invariably pray.
Any blessing God can give
Never be withheld from thee ;
Nor will I desire to live
If that prayer be lost to me ;
Else I were unworthy thee.
If e'er my hand doth aught of good
I do it in thy name ;
For well I know thy kind heart would,
If with me, bid the same.
All mirth I check, for well I know
It is not meet for me ;
No smile shall ever light this brow,
Nor ought, away from thee.

Marian. I thank thee, Laurence, and believe ;
 But this is all I can for thee,
 Save grieve that thou should'st vainly grieve
 I to another am as thou to me ;
 In this strange passion which pain sanctifies ;
 This folly sorrow makes sublime and wise.

Laurence. Oh ! there is nothing in this world of ours
 So sad to see
 As the dark worm which dwells wherever flowers
 Our destiny ;
 Eating the heart out of youth's budding hours
 Of glee.
 Not oft in sunny beds, nor sheltered bowers,
 Life's lot is cast,
 But chiefly lost in shade, and chilled by showers,
 Or the rude blast ;
 Till all its delicate and wholesome powers
 Are past.
 And this then is the end of all the bliss
 Which love and beauty offered, and my soul
 Made certain of in natural triumph ; this
 The heritage of life ; and this, love's goal.

Marian. Peace ! there is one I name not, came not
 here
 Partly because of me. . But think'st thou I
 Came to indulge a wretched vanity
 With thee, or pry into another's sphere ?
 With whom I grieve too ; which is more unblest,
 Whose love is shunned or sought, let time attest !

Helen. And now, for pastime, some one tell a tale ;
 Come, an adventure, Charles.

Charles. Oh, pray dispense
 With my devoirs this time. I fain would try
 If any wit be in the company ;
 By observation, not experience,
 Of course I judge : for of my own
 The world and I are cognizant alone.

Emma. Fatigued, no doubt, with over-admiration
 Of your sweet self.

Helen. Well, all then, in rotation.

Walter. Now I know a delicious tale
 Will suit you, Carrie, to a T.

Caroline. Do tell me then, and I'll believe
It more than truth, if need should be.

Walter. Well; Love is the child of bliss and woe;
So, from his parents dear,
One eye is blinded with a smile,
One drownéd in a tear.
And on one lip there drops a kiss,
Like honey from the wild woodbine;
And that's the lip he had from bliss—
And that's the lip I will have mine:
But on the other hangs a lie,
And that—but that's 'tween you and I.

Caroline. How very odd!

Walter.

Why, it's a fact,

And therefore needs no illustration;
But if you think its principle abstract
It is easily shown in operation.

Caroline. Oh dear! no, no! I'll vow it's true,
Rather than have it proved by you.

George. Well, then, hear me. Now this is true.
Although of love and the lyre too;
And, as it happened all to me,
I say but what I could but see.
I was with the maid I love,
We were happy and alone;
Eve's star just lit the grove,
And the day had been our own.
And my lyre lay by my side,
But no music from it came;
For as sure as e'er I tried
It was harsh or it was tame.
So I flung it to my feet,
And I feigned the while I said,
Thy love I cannot meet;
Thou must not love me, maid.
And more I might have feigned,
When there came a little boy,
And his step fell as light
As a laugh of joy;
And he laughed, and said, I'm Love!
Shall I teach you how to play?
And I said, my pretty boy,

Teach away ! teach away !
So he lifted up the lyre,
And he fingered its strings,
Till I thought they did become
Like spiritual things ;
And the gold chords shone,
From the music he clouded,
Like the links of the lightning,
When tempests come crowded ;
And the strain rose and fell,
'Neath his pink little fingers,
Like a soul due to earth,
That in Heaven still lingers.
He ceased ; and all over
He smiled like the strain
Of the music he made me,
Nor made me in vain ;
For I snatched at the lyre,
While yet it was ringing,
And I sang, it is love
Gives the poet his singing.
Then I turned to my beauty,
Who kissed her young bard,
As she said, love and song
Shall have thus their reward.
He laughed till he cried ;
I pretended to frown ;
So my love made him hide
In her besom of down ;
Where at last he gasped out,
Oh, forgive me, I pray !
But I couldn't help laughing—
Boy, I said, get away !
Let none, then, who love not
Ever offer to sing ;
Let none who say false
Ever strike the gold string ;—
He said ! and I saw but the
Wave of his wing.

Lucy. These stories are delightful ; I declare,
I never dreamed that love was to be seen,
More than a ghost in these enlightened days.

Laurence. Thrice wretched he to whom he comes, I ween.

Charles. I had a strange visit once from Love ;
But when,—indeed I dread to date it.
It is so long since I half forget ;
But if it please you I'll narrate it.

Laura. Oh do ! a poet surely will have something
Pretty to say about the poor dear dumb thing.

Harry. Dumb ! then you know but little of the tyrant !
He'd bellow down a fifth-rate actor by rant.

Charles. It is true I have met him once or twice
Since the event of which I tell ;
He called I find the other day,
And left his card ; but T. T. L.
So if we meet again, the little god
Will get the cut celestial, or a nod
At best. But as I fear I am wasting time,
For shortness sake I'll tell my tale in rhyme.
I nursed with care a favourite fire
In secret and alone ;
And oft I blew it with my breath,
And oft 'twas all but gone.
And not a soul beside myself
Cared for my flame or me ;
It made me sad, it made me glad,
The very secrecy.
At length my absence made me missed ;
They sought me far and near,
With muttered scorn, with smile, with sigh ;
With silence, and a tear ;
And one said let the boy alone,
His flame will soon expire ;
And others said tis nought to us ;
And still I fed my fire.
And friends and kindred all condemned,
With stern and fixed eye,
The love of folly which, they said,
Possessed me ; spake not I.
So one by one they went away,
'Twere useless to remain ;
Their presence or their absence nought--
I fanned my fire again.

And Beauty came, but blamed me not ;
So sweetly did she ask,
Of life and peace, I half forgot
To tend my wayward task ;
Till while her eyes were lift above,
I spied it as I turned ;
Sprang like a bowstring to the bow,
And stirred it till it burned.
And Pride and World-Ambition came,
And tried to tread it out ;
But every ember found its nerve,
And each with pain did shout ;
And Love came, not as he was wont,
With kiss and merry brow,
And eyes like two forget-me-nots,
Dipped in the stream below :—
But up he came with torrent tears,
And pale and reckless look,
And eye as cold as any stone,
In petrifying brook ;
He broke his bow ; his shafts he snapped,
And swore he would expire ;—
I took his bow and arrows both,
And burned them in my fire.
And all that all or aught could do
Was useless to its end ;
The flame, though fitful, flourished still,
In spite of foe or friend.
It warms me now ; I feel it must
Respond to my desire ;
For I have heaped both heart and soul
Upon that deathless fire.

Lucy. Poor thing ! I think you served him very ill ;
But it accounts for our distressed condition ;
For without arms nor wound can he nor kill :
I'm half afraid he'll die of inanition.

Will. With poets every thing must deathless be ;
Now it's the passingness of things that gives
Their most exciting charm to me ;
Life has less beauty if it ever lives.
All loveliest things pass soonest ; clouds and flowers,
Rainbows, heart-kindling glances, the sweet smile ;

Because brief, we admire, or make them ours ;
But we should slight them lived they longer while.

Charles. It is sweet to be awakened by a kiss,
When dreaming of the very lips which waken ;—
Ah ! never be that visionary bliss
But for the bright reality forsaken.
It is sweet to dream we are blessed at last with her
Who first made pleasure in our nature stir :
Though fairer, kinder, since we may have known,
That first voluptuous vision sits her throne ;
Still, in our sleep, plays o'er young passion's part
As pleasure's ghost still haunts the ruined heart,
Where lie the buried loves of younger years,
Whose rites and requiems are sighs and tears.
Sleep on, ye living dead, in day ! nor rise,
But in night's shadowy shapes and dreamy eyes ;
Then let me graft me in your breasts again,
And stanch my bosom of its tearing pain.
Oh ! fade not—stir not—hold me till I die,
In the desire of what I most possess ;
For I would die, as I have lived, in love ;
To dream of happiness is happiness :
And be it but a dream : these very dreams
Are elements of immortality ;
As mind on earth almightily beseems,
And body but an impotent reality.
But dearer than the kiss, and than the dream ;
Than busy bliss, or than remembered love,
It is to feel we shall be deathless here,—
That earth will speak of us when gone above.

George. It is sweet to taste the clear close kiss of
meeting,
And sweet to lengthen still the long embrace ;
It is sweet to see the man we back is beating—
Sweet to be startled by a pretty face.
Is it sweet to hear if fat that we grow thinner ;
Sweet the first drop of claret after dinner ;
But sweeter still than all that's sweet before
Is to hear some say I will say no more :
A blessing I can scarce expect to be
From those who are more near than dear to me ;
You, Charles, for instance.

Charles. Why, you greedy elf,
Would you have all the nonsense to yourself?

Helen. Now let us have no argument I pray.

Frank. Suppose we have a pretty, lively song.

Emma. Suppose you sing it then.

Frank. Well, never say
I don't intend to help you, right or wrong.
Will no one else? Then I'll essay
A song I learned but yesterday.

Oh! gaze on her beautiful soft rolling eye,
And revel with bliss in its languishing love;
Oh! look on its brightness and darkness, and sigh
That truth from that Heaven should ever remove.
Oh! gaze on her ringlets of raven-black hair,
And her delicate eyebrow's soft pencilly line;
Oh! wish that her bosom were pure as it's fair,
That the saint were as worthy of love as the shrine.

I have gazed—I have loved—I have worshipped; and fain
I now would declare it—my madness is passed;
But pleasure no more in my heart will remain
Than the sparkle of spray on the sand beach cast.
I loathe her, and love her—I never can rail—
It is passed, and I reck not—my fortune I dare;
Henceforward the shroud of my hopes is my sail,
And the peace which I sought I have found in despair.

Caroline. If that's called lively, or in part or wholly,
The gods preserve me from your melancholy.

Harry. 'Tis no use saying that I love you, Sophy,
For if I do you only cry out, oh fy!
Nathless as some one else must sing,
Wait only till I screw this string.

I love not horse,
I love not wine;
Nor song nor dance
Be joys of mine.
And dull to me
Are the skies above;
I love not lore,
I love not love.
But thee I now
Love, and e'er will;
For love's the best
Point in me still.
And since my heart
Owns nought above thee,
It must be Philo-
Sophy to love thee.

Laura. Hast thou got anything there for me?
For surely thou never should'st bring me near thee,
Unless thou hast some gift with thee,
To bribe me to hear thee.

Edward. I bring thee neither bribe nor boon,
I offer only flowers,
Which, gathered thus, devise the hope
Each other's hearts are ours.
But mind I see one poison bloom
Thrust like a motto from the tomb,
Amid some merry song ;
As every being hath its bane,
As the brightest clouds are thick with rain,
And the day hath night-shade long ;
But if one gem of joy there be,
Too many for the day's bright wreath,
Then may the night-shade give it thee,
Though it be joy to death ;
For I would neither love nor die
Beneath a broad and laughing sky :
No ; heart and spirit, take your flight,
Aye in the still and starry night.
Receive them, lady, in that breast,
With peace and purity to rest ;
And oh ! if not too much for prayer,
My life my love, my all be there.
Ah, happy flowerets ! if the while
Ye ope beneath her summer smile ;
But to pluck the poison from the rest,
Beauty of night, come deck my breast.
Beauty of night, thou art blithe and bright,
While all thy sister blooms are sleeping :
And though thou canst but bloom to blight,
Wilt wake and laugh in dewy light,
While they are dreaming, they are weeping.
Beauty of night, I will, will win thee.
Flower of life, my life is in thee ;
Beauty of night, I knew that light
Had shade, and knew that night had deeper ;
But they but bring to weary wight
The sleep which love alone will slight,
And thou who wringest life from the sleeper.

Beauty of night, I have, have won thee;
Flower of death, my death be on me.

Laura. Thou may'st be happy if thou wilt,
Nor envy these poor flowers their spot;
For close as in a clenched hand
Thy love within my heart hath lot.

Fanny. Who mentioned ghosts? In nothing I so glory
As a true thrilling, chilling, good ghost story.

Edward. But on a soft and fragrant summer eve,
With glistening flowers and flashing waters by,
One lacks the proper impulse to believe:—
But then I don't believe them.

Will. Oh! nor I.

Lucy. They want a fireside and a howling storm;
Summer time seems too sensual and warm.

Frederic. Oh! you are a parlous little infidel,
Or I could tell a tale; but I am not well.
My head seems wrong, and somehow, altogether,
Feels like a bullet on a peacock's feather.

Walter. Do you believe that spirits interfere
With men, events, or actions anywhere?

Charles. Let gold bagged priests, from Ganges to
Bermudas,
The gospel preach, according to St Judas;
It is my opinion, if the truth were known,
That earth pertains to man and beast alone;
And neither saint, nor fiend, nor bright nor dark angel,
Between the south Pole and the port of Archangel,
Have any call, or leave, or will, or power
To meddle with a mortal for an hour.

Fanny. Oh! you're an unbeliever.

Charles. That is true,

So far as this—I don't believe in you.

Helen. Sir, you are rude. But since my faith's attacked,
What of immortals? Is it not a fact
That saints and demons oft-times interact?
Such the belief at least in times of yore,
Which, if we share not, our disgrace is more.
Things sacred and supernal did we mind
More, and omit the meaner cares of life,
Our souls would grow like holy, like refined,
With loftier thoughts and nobler actions rife.

There is an ancient legend I have heard
 About a saint, a demon, and a stone,
 Which bears upon this matter word for word ;
 A marvel I myself have seen and known.

Harry. Enchant us, pray, still further. We will
 be

Moveless and mute to meet your wishes ;
 Your's the sole speech, your awful audience we ;
 Between us, Saint Antonio, and the fishes.

Helen. A stone stands in a rustic town,
 Which once the neighbouring hill did crown ;
 Nigh to the house of God it lay
 Before 'twas set where now it stands ;
 And how and why there graybeards say
 Was ne'er the work of mortal hands ;
 But list, and ye eftsoons shall know,
 From runes translated into rhyme,
 How saint and fiend would have it so
 Far back within the olden time.

That village church stands fair and free ;
 Those village bells peal merrily,
 As well they might and still they may,
 On many a bright autumnal day,
 When both in hostel, cot, and hall,
 They hold the village festival.

The godly rustics on that day
 At church had met to praise and pray,
 And thank the Giver of all good,
 By Him that died upon the rood,
 For harvest stored and daily food ;
 And, as saint Wilfrid's care they claimed,
 Oft in their prayers his name was named.
 At morn, at noon, at eventide,
 Their task the merry ringers plied,
 Pealing each time, with joy increased,
 A welcome to the rustic feast.

But it roused the wrath of the fell fiend,
 As high o'er minster fane he leaned,
 In the dim glooming of the day,
 Blent with the moonlight's silvery gray.
 Quoth he, " I hate that holy peal ;
 Yon village church my wrath shall feel,"

He said ; and from the stately lands,
Whereon the high cathedral stands,
He heaved a huge gray granite stone,
Erst as a Druid altar known :
And lifting it between his teeth,
And three times scanty drawing breath,
Wide on the air his arms he spread,
And dropped it on the minster's head :
E'en as an eagle drops a hare
Brought for her callow younglets' fare.
Upon the main tower straight he stands,
And as he glanced o'er field and fell,
He weighed the weapon in his hands,
And took his aim and distance well ;
And when the moon's last glimmering ray
Died on the tall church spire away,
Three hours he gazed it through the dark,
Nor winked his eye once on the mark.
As midnight tolled—for mightiest then
Is all demoniac power o'er men—
The rock he raised—Foul fiend forbear !
And hurled it, hurtling, through the air.
Saint Wilfrid, from his seat above,
Where with the blessed, whose deathless days
Are passed 'tween deeds of sacred love
And their adored Redeemer's praise,
Cast on the house of praise and prayer,
The object of his hallowed care,
One glance, and marked the missile fly
Midway betwixt the earth and sky,
A momentary prayer he made ;
And there the mighty mass was stayed ;
Aloft in air the altar hung,
As moveless as before 'twas flung.
Then spake saint Wilfrid : “ Baffled fiend,
What evil can from Heaven be screened ?
Though in the depth of midnight thou
Didst ween to crush yon pile below,
Yet know that to celestial eyes
Divinest daylight never dies ;
And saints defend the things they love
As God protects the saints above.

While men invoke their holy names,
 And on their prayers for succour call,
 So long shall saints fulfil their claims,
 So long their shrines shall never fall.
 He ceased ; the air-arrested rock
 Fell earthwards with a harmless shock,
 A long half mile beyond the bound
 Of the good church's hallowed ground.
 The Demon balked made off in rage,
 And the stone slept for many an age.
 And still, a startling sight I ween,
 The foul fiend's teeth-dints may be seen ;
 And still, though grey and wondrous old,
 The stone itself is never cold,
 But keeps within its fated form
 A gust of the fiend's firebreath warm.

Charles. Well, may we speak ?

Helen. Oh, certainly. Give tongue.

Charles. I know not what is false if that be true ;
 Nor need we care or reckon what is wrong.

Helen. You are content to take the shallowest view.
 Apollo laid his lyre upon a stone ;
 The stone was seized with music ; and the touch
 Of mortal could awake the god's own tone
 For ever after. Marvel ye not much.
 Wherever God may choose or man may dwell,
 This is an ever-acting miracle.
 When once the gift of godlike poesy
 Hath touched the heart, it answers everything
 In its own tongue, but with a harmony
 Instinct of Heaven. Let the world then fling
 Its arms of honour round the Poet's breast,
 And Heaven may hear earth's music and have rest.
 Now true it is the great earth knoweth not
 That it is part of Heaven and God's own lot ;
 But some there are who know it. So there be
 Bards who affect much infidelity ;
 Although they never can abandon quite
 Their loyal love to the pure Infinite.

Charles. True, my liege.

Helen. Hush ! now Frederic we await
 The story that you spoke of. Tell it straight.

Frederic. Please you, my liege, I'll try then and remember ;
And for the rest—why, fancy it's December.
'Twas midnight, and a noble sat in his ancestral hall,
Where many a stern old portrait gloomed along the gilded wall ;
And ivory, marble, ebony, and tapestries adorned
The seats he used, the floors he trode ; for meaner things he scorned.
And youth, and fame, and might were his—the splendid might of mind ;
His spirit swept and bowed all hearts as bending forests wind ;
Yet youth and genius oft, too oft, in worship bow the knee
At pleasure's shrine, in folly's fane ; more madly none than he.
He sat, but not in solitude : a damsel by his side,
Of beauty bright and gay of heart, him with the wine cup plied ;
Gazing on him with eye as though to him her soul were due :
Oh, nought 'neath Heaven itself might match that eye's dark sunny blue !
From which, too, ever and anon smiles o'er her face would fly,
Like the electric flames which flit o'er summer's evening sky ;
And pearls were beaded o'er her brow, and gems lit up her breast,
Like dew drops on the morning rose when wakening from rest,
“One parting goblet,” cried the youth, “ere I away to-night :
Bring me the old monk's skull-cup, girl ; peace to his jovial sprite !”
She by the lofty window went,—where, in the moon's pale sheen,
The gray old cloisters arch about their fountain-centred green ;
The statued satyrs seemed to grin and jibber 'neath her eye,
And as she looked, a death-like cloud came creeping up the sky,

And in one long and trembling moan the night gust strove
to die; *

Up to the ebon cabinet with flowery pearl inlaid,
And seized the goblet-skull, and laughed,—how laughed
that merry maid !

He poured it full with bubbling wine, impatient to be
quaffed,

Full to the silver-written rim, and drained it at a draught;
“ Ah, would its owner were but here !” and gaily both they
laughed.

“ Again,” he cried,—“ but what is that stirs in the far-off
gloom ?”

The lady looked, and shrieked, and rushed out of that royal
room.

Enveloped in a sable cowl and stole of sightless hue,
A ghostly figure glided swift that noble youth unto.

Why drops the goblet from his grasp ? Why trembles he
with dread ?

The grave hath given birth ;—he sees a spirit of the dead.

Another moment, unappalled, erectly still he stands ;

He would not quail to man nor fiend, for half his goodly
lands.

Yet, like a tree by sudden gust, his soul was seized with
fear

An instant—and his spirit shook as drew the spectre near ;
His small white hand, veined like a leaf, close to his bosom
clung,

And every nerve and sinew grew like to a bowstring strung,
As with a shadow's voice it said—“ I am the Monk of
old,

A fragment of whose mortal frame I at thy feet behold.

For that I plead not, reck not now ; a thing of nobler fate
Hast thou perverted and defiled than aught of human state,
Than bone or body ; sin, in truth, the soul doth desecrate.”

“ Nay, holy father !” said the youth, “ if thou hast left old
Death

To preach to me at dead of night, waste not thy pious
breath !

Pledge me in this ! the night is cold, yet colder is the
grave ;

And wine will warm thee. Shrink not back : immortals
should be brave.

Ah! know'st the cup? Well, heed it not! right welcome
 shalt thou be
 To drain it with me every night, and—*benedicite*."
 With that he raised the cup to fill and quaff it as before,
 Till fast as poured the wine became but dust encrusted
 gore;
 He cast it on the fire,—the lake could not have quenched
 it more.
 Again the spectre spake, and still in cold and tomb-like
 tone,
 "Drink thou with whom thou wilt, with girls, with gallants,
 or alone;
 I come to warn thee of thy fate; a fate to me made known."
 The old monk raised his cowl; nor face, nor feature was
 there there;
 Nay, nothing but two eyes which burned like stars distinct
 in air.
 "Thou in a foreign clime shalt die, and thy poor fleshly
 frame
 Be borne across the seas to rest by theirs from whom it
 came.
 Thy heart alone shall be inurned upon the spot where
 thou
 Wilt pay the forfeit of thy life, where Death looks for thee
 now.
 Embalmed, enshrined thy heart shall be, in gemmed and
 costly case,
 And as a thing of worship set before a nation's face;
 Till, in the lapse of coming years, some sacrilegious thief
 Shall filch that relic, set at nought that weeping people's
 grief.
 The sacred dust which dwelt within, the dust which now
 swells high
 Within thy bosom he shall strew abroad relentlessly.
 And this in retribution, youth, for that thou there hast
 done."
 The voice, the vision ceased, and lo! that instant it was
 gone.
 Again the night wind sweeps along those old and ivied
 halls;
 Again o'er lake and fountain free the witching moonlight
 falls;

Chequering through the panes the dim old paintings round
the walls.

But there was one who never went into that room again;
And prayers, and tears, and jeers were each alike essayed
in vain.

That dark unearthly visitor was ever in her mind,
Like to the awe which filleth fanes where gods have once
been shrined.

And morning met the youth all pale, and pacing to and
fro;—

But ah! the goblet skull he touched never again, I trow.

Lucy. There; does not that convert you?

Charles. Not a whit.

I don't believe a single word of it;
Nor yet of summer fairies, winter ghosts,
Nor any other spiritual hosts.

Sophia. See then how inconsistent you must be
In the sad tale you told us about Love.

Charles. The credit of my creed concerns but me,
Either in earth below or Heaven above.

Helen. You speak more laxly, Charles, than I think
prudent;

I wish you knew our solemn friend, the student;
Though he condemns all fribbles, and—as such—

Charles. But students, whatso'er their kind,
Must now and then unstring the mind.

In years gone by I have believed so much,—
My liege imperial knows I don't deceive her,
That as infinity does on nothing touch,
My next door neighbour now's an unbeliever;
And no one can imagine who has not
Tried incredulity, how blessed his lot,

Emma. Just now, Charles, you uncourteously named
The fairies.

Charles. I confess.

Emma. Then I propose,—
Of your impiety are we so ashamed,
A solemn censure on such loose opinions;
And strict expulsion from these free dominions.

Caroline. Have mercy!

Emma. What can be too bad for those
Who'll not believe their senses? I suppose

All here have seen the rings the fairies track,
 In dancing on the mead ; and he must lack
 Mere sense who doubts of their existence, when
 Their footsteps are as marked as those of men ?

Charles. Commandress of the beautiful ! of these
 thrones

Supreme disposer ! star incarnate, hear !
 Thy sceptral lily no companion knows ;
 Thy flowery crown no rival in our sphere.
 Ask any fiery proof which may demand
 The fatal service of this loyal hand ;
 But while I grant your loftier condition,
 I can't be reasoned into superstition.

Helen. Men ! I give notice I am sitting here
 To answer and console the sad in heart.
 Who is in love ?

Charles. I am, sweet judge, I fear,
 And hope unbiassed you will take my part.

Helen. What do you wish ?

Charles. Fair justice, if it please—

Helen. To mock our ears with your mock miseries ?
 Sit ; we'll not hear them. You shall truly tell
 That love does oftener than he says, farewell.

Charles. With truth I cannot ; but I'll state my case.

Helen. May it bear out your miserable face !

Charles. I have lived on ladies' eyes,
 Dined on kisses, supped on sighs ;
 I have warmed me with their smiles,
 I have been wet through with tears ;
 They've half-slain me with their wiles—
 Charming, cheating, pretty dears ;
 They have scratched me in their play,
 Sighed and sucked the wound away ;
 They have squeezed me black and blue,
 Roughed my hair and boxed my ears,
 Laughed and looked me through and through :
 Oh the cruel angel dears !

Fanny. Indeed you have been sadly treated.

Charles. Ah me ! how I have been jilted, cheated ;
 It would move the passion of a stone ;
 And yet when, not with ladies I'm alone.
 I like the company of women most,

And after their's my own :
 Among men I feel always lost.
 Ladies' society for me, or none.

Helen. Peace! say no more. We all agree in part.
 This court thinks fit to confiscate your heart ;
 And, till the fine be paid, to one at least—
 Some lady here—you cannot be released.
 Begone! thank us that you escape so well
 From what it is impossible to tell.

Charles. Oh! I appeal against my fate.

Helen. Just as a cur a coach may bait.
 It nought avails.

Charles. But what am I to do ?
 The puzzling power of a pair of eyes !
 One pair is black, one grey, another blue :
 I am a sacrifice !
 They are three—the sweet sisters I love in my heart,
 And all so unlike and so fair ;
 When with all, I am longing to love them apart,
 And apart, I would all of them there.
 By the world, I dare say, I shall greedy be reckoned,
 But my wish I can name in a word :
 I would live with the first, I would die with the second,
 And immortal I'd be with the third.

Helen. Go; we have pardoned you with like contrition,
 As we condemned—without condition ;
 This point excepted—that you sing a song
 In token your deliverance is wrong,
 Though just my judgment. Pray don't keep us long ;
 Or banishment perhaps may be your lot.

Charles. Oh! I protest against it.

Others. Despot fair.

Your sentence is too cruel.

Helen. Hold, slaves! what ?
 Dispute! I fine you each. So now, despair.
 Thus We adopt first the most stringent measure ;
 Our taxes are your songs, your fines our pleasure.
 These ladies will assist you now and then.

Laura. Oh, certainly.

Emma. Behave yourselves like men.

Charles. There's no escaping, it appears to me,
 However nod and wink, etc., be.

I look on thee while singing,
 Thou bright-eyed love of mine,
 As misers while they're ringing
 The gold they love to shine.

Then while on this poor earth,
 Where pain and sorrow bound us,
 We'll quaff the wine in mirth,
 And music make around us ;

We'll drink the wine-god, Bacchus,
 And all our merry friends,
 And if old Death attack us,
 Why, then, the frolic ends.

Laurence. Pray, is that all? The moral, to my
 thought,
 Is yet to come, as certainly it ought.

Frank. When a man asks for morals, it's a sign
 That he is wanting either them or wine.

Charles. Let the young be glad! though cares in
 crowds

Leave scarce a break of blue,
 Yet hope gives wings to morning clouds;
 And while their shade the sky enshrouds—
 By love and wine, which through them shine—
 They are turned to a golden hue.
 Then give us wine, for we ought to shine
 In the hour of dark and dew.

Helen. A broad hint truly. Pay the bard his fee.
 I dare say he is thirsty

Frank and Others. So are we!

Charles: What ho! a butt of sack!

Helen.

But no butt here!

Or sack you'll get another way I fear.
 Remember that, within our sacred sight,
 You should continue abstinent, to-night.
 Indeed I don't approve that sort of song;
 And think it very rude and rather wrong.
 To make my subjects good is my main plan;
 Let them be merry with it, if they can.
 Mind, as it is, I am resolved almost,
 To make you forfeit your important post.

Charles. Lady, I swear I never to offend meant.
 Our next shall move you all as an amendment.

Helen. Now seriatim, gentles, if you please ;
We are quite resolved to list your melodies.

Lucy. Come, no more flinching.

Frank, Walter, and Others, apart. Let us sing a glee
And so by singing all at once, evade
The separate penalty.

Edward. Dost think that she,
The tyrant of this fair festivity,
Will bear to have her words so far bewrayed ?
No more than ice bear blood-heat in the shade.

Walter. We can but try.

Charles. Remember what I told you,
And think upon the bright eyes that behold you.

The crow—the crow ! the great black crow !
He cares not to meet us wherever we go ;
He cares not for man, beast, friend, nor foe,
For nothing will eat him he well doth know.

Know—know ! you great black crow !
It's a comfort to feel like a great black crow !

The crow—the crow ! the great black crow !
He loves the fat meadow—his taste is low ;
He loves the fat worms, and he dines in a row
With fifty fine cousins all black as a sloe.

Sloe—sloe ! you great black crow !
But it's jolly to fare like a great black crow.

The crow—the crow ! the great black crow !
He never gets drunk on the rain or snow ;
He never gets drunk, but he never says no !
If you press him to tipples ever so.

So—so ! you great black crow !
It's an honour to soak like a great black crow.

The crow—the crow ! the great black crow !
He lives for a hundred years and mo' ;
He lives till he dies, and he dies as slow
As the morning mists down the hill that go.

Go—go ! you great black crow !
But it's fine to live and die like a great black crow.

Helen. Your principles are purer, I perceive. You
Are much the same in practice.

Frank. I believe you.

Edward. Now, lest rebellion dare dispute the helm
With her, appointed over us, to be
The crowned mistress of our joyous realm,
I here maintain her sacred sovereignty.

Firm to her throne, her crown, I stand,
And vouch her irresponsible command.

Helen. Thanks, Edward; I would knight you on the spot,

But, really, I'm afraid, my sword's forgot.
However, take my verbal accolade!
Imagine I embrace you; and in proof
Of your high act of fealty just made,
Sing, Sir, I charge you, on your own behoof.

Edward. Sing I cannot; but if you please to list
A fable, from a fine old moralist,
Whose name I have forgotten—but no matter—
Æsop or some one—probably the latter—
Mark! In the silver age, ere guile had birth,
While beasts yet spake the mother tongue of earth,
Which the birds set to music, and each kind
Lived in pure order, and with friendlike mind,
The lion and the horse, the ass and mule,
Had shared the earth among them; but each grown
Ambitious to possess all power alone,
They therefore met to settle who should rule.
The eagle they petitioned to preside,
And swore by his decision to abide.
The bird of curv'd beak and radiant eye
Bowed wordlessly, and swept down from the sky.
Imprimis, said the ass, be it known that I,
Beside myself—though now being noon they sleep—
Speak for the beeves, and represent the sheep.
A pack, the lion cried, of lazy elves!
Take notice, that we represent ourselves.
The horse responded, true! The mule concurred.
Now, quoth the eagle, let the cause be heard.
My liege, the lion took him at the word.
He need not say he came of royal race;
His voice was thunder; most he loved the chase;
And hated aught was cowardly or base.
He for his magnanimity was famed;
And only what he killed he fairly claimed.
The Deity beside had honoured him
And chose his countenance 'mid the cherubim.
The horse, too, claimed descent from noblest blood;
His fathers formed the sun-god's fiery stud;

Foremost in war, in peace, in use, in show,
The choicest he of all the brutes below.
The ass then; what you each have said is true;
But hath an angel e'er appeared to you?
I trow not; humbly therefore I precede
Lion and horse, I think; both great indeed,
But ne'er have known the glory to be rode,
As I have, by the Son, on earth, of God:
In memory whereof, across my shoulders,
A cross may be beheld by all beholders.
At this the horse and lion jerked their manes;
Their mouths could boast of honours without reins;
Neither did glory in subjection lie.
I boast not, quoth the ass, Heaven knows, not I;
But to be guided by a mightier mind
Than of your own, or man's, your master's kind,
Is honour. Said the horse, in pride self-schooled,
That only proves you fittest to be ruled.
The question now is—as I understand—
Which of us four is fittest to command.
That is the question, said the lion coldly.
Why, then, broke in the mule, a trifle boldly,
If in my own poor person I can prove
All your chief virtues, at but one remove,
Or those of two of you, at least, 'twere best
Choose me at once, and set the thing at rest.
'Tis true I do not roar, nor do I bray;
Some think my whinny very like a neigh;
And with good reason, I am proud to say.
To you, dear ass, upon the sire's side,
To you, sir steed, I'm on the dam's allied;
Wherefore,—A fig for this vain pedigree,
Exclaimed the lion; what's all this to me?
Shall I my long-lived ancestry declare,
And tawny mothers in their Libyan lair?
My race preceded Adam's; that I swear.
Perhaps, you'll say next who's your son and heir.
His would-be majesty hung down his head.
Mark him! the mule's indulgent kindred said,
Go, child. Content you with an humbler rule.
Seek not the throne. Remember you're a mule.
Your many rare and virtuous parts we own;
But make no pretext to the bestial throne.

We all are sensible —The mule replied,
 We are all sensible, on our own side.
 It goes against my nature to contend,—
 I never was called obstinate—with a friend.
 From this dispute I henceforth hold aloof;
 And here abjure,—but no, accept my hoof.
 Good, said the eagle; on that view I base
 My judgment in this all important case.
 Let each competitor his natural place
 Resume. The lion, monarchlike, alone
 Hath sympathies with no race but his own;
 And therefore may, impartial, fill the throne.
 The rest, that with each other kindly blend,
 And form one type of being, we commend
 To labour and endure, this; that, to fend
 The throne against the legioned herd, or those
 'Gainst any that may chance to prove their foes.
 And if aught hostile 'tween those twain should pass,
 Let the great lion guard the burdened ass;
 For labour is most honoured, as we see
 The ass, by Heaven's all-working Deity.
 In rank though last, in honour first he stands,
 Conscious of contact with Divinest hands.
 Let horse, ass, lion, thus to live agree,
 Share and obey a mutual sovereignty;
 And the fourth aid and mediate 'tween the three,
 Intact in nature, ever furthering peace,
 And moderated temper. So shall cease
 All strife among you, and supreme respect
 Grace the pure power such good that can effect
 To this the four assented, and retired,
 Well pleased. The eagle into Heaven aspired.

Caroline. O happy days! but then, you must allow,
 Brutes spoke as sensibly as men do now.

Edward. If all said square not wholly with the time
 Firstly laid down, it matters not in rhyme;
 Which, with an all-controlling care of things,
 Gives its own laws to chaos or to kings.

Frank. A heart full of feeling, a cup full of wine
 Come—sip, love; come—sip, love;
 There's nothing I lack but that sweet lip of thine;
 Thy lip, love—thy lip, love.
 Thine eyes are like two romping stars,

That look as they had drank of wine ;
And flying from night's brow, had brought
Their liquid love to thine.

But I forget ; they're not the words I mean.

Helen. Wilt sing, Sophia ?

Sophia.

I obey thee, Queen.

Of knight and lady to each other true,

I sing the generous lay, their due.

Yes, lady dear, for aye—adieu !

The false world I defy, lady ;

But thou, sweet soul, so fair, so true,

I would thou couldst not sigh, lady.

Oh ! mind thee not of me when gone,

But lay thy memory by, lady ;

In light and joyaunce live thou on ;

Leave me, leave me to sigh, lady !

O fair ! O true ! for aye I go ;

From thee, from thee I hie, lady ;

I must not yield me to thy woe,

I dare not list thee sigh, lady.

Yonder thou seest my father's hall,

Whose turrets pierce the sky, lady ;

Ah ! rather might they on me fall,

Than I would hear thee sigh, lady.

To far-off lands now wends his way ;

And, if he there should die, lady,

Oh ! let thy true love, happy, say

He never caused thee sigh, lady.

Farewell for aye ! It wrings thy heart ;

It drowns thy darkening eye, lady.

Farewell ! I feel what 'tis to part ;

But say thou wilt not sigh, lady.

Will. May none here ever know as true

The false cold lover's last adieu !

But yet to shew things as they be,

The false maid thus ye all may see.

Thou lov'st another, maiden !

And I am free as thou ;

My heart with scorn is laden,

To speak but with thee now.

Though through thy glossy ringlets

My hand hath often played,

Here—take it back ! I loathe it—

The long imbosomed braid.

Away, away ! no more with thee,

Thou falsest, fairest maid !

One heart is ripe and laden
 With love for me e'en now ;
 I'll woo me, then, the maiden
 More kind, more true than thou.
 Then give it to my rival,
 The black and glossy braid ;
 And give the hand which twined it,
 The cheek whereon it played.
 Away, away ! no more with thee,
 Thou fairest, falsest maid.

Helen. There beams, methinks, a story in those eyes,
 Lucy, of thine, of faithfulness to death,
 Unlike the desolate discords which now rise
 So oft 'tween hearts love still companioneth.

Lucy. Most gentle sovereign ! sacred be thy hest ;
 Would the light levy yet were worthier thee.
 My lay belongs then to the city bright,
 Which, goddess-like, sprang sparkling from the sea.

Thus to a fair Venetian maid,
 The proudest of the train,
 With which the Doge went forth arrayed
 To wed his vassal main ;
 "This very day," her lover said,
 "Will Venice go the sea to wed."
 "Now tell me, lady, what to do,
 To win this hand of thine ;
 I'll risk both soul and body too,
 For such a prize divine."
 "I'll have the bridal ring," said she,
 "Wherewith the Doge will wed the sea."
 Came forth the Doge and all his train,
 And sailed upon the sea ;
 The banners waved, and music's strain
 Rose soft and heavenwardly ;
 And blue waves raced to seize the ring
 Which glided through them glittering.
 The lover through the bright array
 Rushed by the Doge's side :
 A plunge—and plume and mantle gay
 Lay lashing on the tide ;
 He heard a shriek, but down he dived,
 To follow where the ring arrived.
 He sought so long, that all above
 Believed him gone for aye ;
 Nor knew they 'twas his haughty love
 Who shrieked and swooned away.
 At length he rose to light—half-dead—
 But held the ring above his head.

The lady wept—the lover smiled—
 She had not deemed he would
 Have dared it,—was a foolish child—
 And loved as none else could.
 “Take it and be a faithful bride
 To death,” the lover said, and died.

The lady to a convent hied,
 And took the holy vows;
 And was till death a faithful bride
 To her Eternal spouse.
 And then the ring her lover gave
 They buried with her in her grave.

Walter. A gem may have a hundred sides,
 And glitter bright in each :
 Where true philosophy presides
 Pleasure it is to teach ;
 I therefore choose the charms of happy faith,
 Secure in love's all present joy ;
 From aught that might e'en dreams alloy,
 With dread of future skaith.

I dreamed of thee, love, in the eve,
 And I lay among bright blushing flowers ;
 I awoke—and, ah ! how could I grieve,
 If the blooms hurried back to their bowers ?

I dreamed of thee, love, in the night,
 And the stars stood around by my head ;
 I awoke to thy beauty so bright,
 And the stars hid their faces and fled.

I dreamed of thee, love, in the morn,
 And a poet's bright dreamings drew nigh ;
 I awoke, and I laughed them to scorn :
 They were black by the blink of thine eye.

I dreamed of thee, love, in the day,
 And I wept as I slept o'er thy charms ;
 I awoke as my dream went away,
 And my tears were all wet on thine arms.

Helen. Ah ! who would long for bliss above,
 That tastes the joys below ?
 Or, hanging on the lips of Love,
 Would seek to kiss his brow ?
 Unless to change and clear the taste,
 Lest sweets in sameness run to waste.

George. Come, do you dance ?

Laurence. No ; we two here remain.

Marian. But why indulge in mutual sorrows vain?
And if I grant this one request—

Laurence. It is the last time I shall be so blessed.
Oh! thou art kind, and I will think
This wine to be thy love I drink;
Blood my heart would gladly miss,
Could it so be filled with this;
And each pulse would madlier move,
Warm with wine, alive with love.
Look upon it, love, and weep
Thine eyelight o'er its purple deep;
So each luminous glance shall be
Like a phosphor globelet in the sea.
Other lovers soon will sue thee—
Let them—they will ne'er possess
More than I enjoy who view the
Lightning of thy loveliness.
It may be love and light in Heaven,
But here on earth such love is death;
And such light is blindness driven,
Lance-like, through the breast and breath.
All who love thee sure will die:
Thy beauty hath fatality.
For now is near my heart's last hour;
I feel it fading like a flower,
When folding up its leaves to rest,
And narrowing in its own sweet breast.
I mean not that I die to-day,
But that my spirit wears away.
And, save thyself, sees nought to lure it
Back to earth's falsehoods which immure it.

Marian. Thou wilt live yet many happy years.
Far more in number than the tears
Men shed o'er broken hearts, if not
When first forsaken, aye forgot;
While we, according to old fashion,
With our own tears must slake our passion,
Or weeping in our bosoms lorn and lone,
Try if tears cannot turn the heart to stone.

Laurence. Promise, dearest, when I die.

Marian. Such phrase can scarce to me apply.

Laurence. Not to mourn, nor weep, nor sigh;

Eyes like thine should never weep,
 Nor sweet bosom sorrow keep.
 Let nor stone nor verse, nor aught
 Mark where rests—what loved and thought;
 If they ask thee where I lie,
 Say, within thy memory.
 Weep not thou o'er grave of mine,
 Sprinkle on it sparkling wine;
 That shall keep the grass all new
 Like to an immortal dew;
 And some fallen star shall stay,
 Watching, while thou art away.
 Scatter rose and ivy wreath
 On the turf I rest beneath;
 Dance and sing my favourite song
 Through the deep blue twilight long;
 In that rich and ringing tone,
 Heaven to thee, love, lends alone.
 When I'm gone, then, come again;
 Talk to me in lightsome strain;
 Should I answer, start not thou!
 I'll but say I'm blessed as now;
 Should no sound the silence break,
 Think me, oh! too blessed to speak.
 Let me lie till angels say,
 Wake! the world's long week is passed:
 Spirit! this is holy-day;
 This is God's—the best and last.

Marian. Well were such feeling, such request,
 To any save to me addressed.

Helen. Come Marian, having finished our parade,
 We have leisure now to list another lay;
 But since you have not been dancing, I'm afraid
 Laurence and you are idle, lovesick, say?

Marian. Could I comply I'd not remain thus mute.

Frederic. Shall I sing for you as a substitute?

I saw a rose was fading—
 Fading 'neath mine eye;
 When thus, with love's upbraiding,
 I heard that passed one sigh:—
 Oh! give me back one blush—

But one from out the many
 I loved to give to thee
 Ere other I knew any—
 Liked or looked on any.
 For I am sad and lonely—
 Lone and like to die ;
 Oh ! give me back one only,
 I am too weak to cry.
 The beam, the breeze, the dew,
 Shun now my shrinking bosom ;
 Tears I have need but few,
 Their brine can bring no blossom—
 Me, nor blight nor blossom.
 Then to that rose was failing—
 Failing 'neath mine eye,
 I said, 'tis useless wailing ;
 Forget, forgive, and die.
 One look to Heaven in prayer,
 And one to me in kindness ;
 The deathwind shook its leaves,
 And I was one with blindness—
 Lone in burning blindness.

Harry. Although I would not needlessly intrude—

Fanny. To sing, not being asked, is rude.

Harry. To cease with such a dull down-hearted ditty
 Would be a wrong, I think, as well as pity.

Lucy. Pray, sing us something livelier, then.

Sophia. And don't be personal again.

Harry. Annie's eyes are like the night,
 Nell's are like the morning grey,
 Fanny's like the gloaming light,
 Hal's are sunny as the day :
 Bright—dark—blue—grey,
 I could kiss them night and day :
 Grey—blue—dark—bright—
 Morning, evening, noon, and night.
 Annie's brow's arched like the sky,
 Nell's is white without a spot,
 Hal's is as a palace high,
 Fanny's lowly like a cot :
 High—arched—low—white,
 I could kiss them day and night ;
 White—low—arched—high,
 Kiss them night and day could I.
 Annie's lips are warm and bright,
 Fanny's free and full of play,
 Hal's are sweetest out of sight,
 Nell's are always in the way :

Bright—warm—sweet—play,
 I could kiss them night and day;
 Play—sweet—warm—bright,
 All the day and all the night.

Will. Mulcted in song I hasten to discharge
 The debt I owe, and pay it thus in large.

Oh! Love's a bold pirate—the soul of the sea!
 He impresses the proud and he fetters the free;
 His flag's a red heart, in the bows are his guns,
 And the wind's always with him—the foe ever runs.
 Oh, Love's a bold pirate—the son of the sea!
 The winds are his laws, and his laws make him free.
 The star that he steers by, her eye he adores,
 And the haven he's bound for, earth's infinite shores.
 Oh! Love's a bold pirate—the sword of the sea!
 For the poor he hath plunder, and fame for the free;
 At home in a chase, he nor spares foe nor friend;
 Though a stern chase, and long chase, the longest must end.
 Oh! Love's a bold pirate—the pet of the sea!
 He will do all, and dare all, 'gainst all that may be;
 He hails her all fair, just before they fall to't,
 And his foe makes his prize and his consort to boot.

Helen. Were Festus here, and his strange friend,
 Who like his shadow, follows him,
 We should not feel so lost, nor lend
 One's heart to mirth I scarce commend;
 Mirth, whose hot breath pure soul will dim.
 For he whom all here present, love,
 And I adore, fails ne'er to move
 Our hearts to dwell on loftier themes
 Than pleasure's chase, or joy's vain dreams.

Charles. Your loveliness is always right,
 In fallibility's despite.

Though now as fond of harmless mirth,
 As any faithless miscreant on the earth;
 Yet cultured mind it scarce beseems,
 All art's achievements, wisdom's gains,
 And truths, which knowledge justly deems
 Outbalance conquest's costliest pains,
 For youth's vain joys to sacrifice;
 And mute but bright applause of beauty's eyes.

Helen. Witness, ye stars! the vow to you addressed;
 Shall never more such thoughtless hours be given
 By me to merest pleasures! Thus confessed,

Behold this crosslet, from its velvet rest,
Like birdling bright, from mother's nest
Snatched, I have placed upon my breast;
Sign that for higher aims my soul hath striven;
You, Charles, have seen me, and shall know the rest.

Charles. I marked a constellation rise in Heaven.

Marian. And what remains for me but rest,
Acceptance, and a soul to peace resigned?
Let me not Heaven's decrees contest,
Nor scan with carping mind.
Life to lay down, as love to leave,
If called, I ought without regret;
Comes not the beauty of the eve
Till all the sun be set.

And though they last not quite an hour,
Yet have the vespers more
Of holy evercoming power,
Than all day-rites before.
If soon the sunshine of my day
Hath grown beclouded, who shall say
Life's worse probation is not o'er?

Helen. Be it, for mercy's sake, I pray.
And now that we enough have laughed and mourned,
This house of kings and queens must stand adjourned.
The day hath darkened into twilight, night
Hath glittered into starlight, since we met;
The restorative dew hangs thick and bright
On herb and tree and flower; yon foamy jet
Flings up its bubbling music chillier now;
And droop the blooms that long have wreathed the brow.
Ladies, and you bold serfs! I now propose
To bring this joyous vigil to a close;
And as all bidden have now paid their fine,
To leave these heroes to their fate—their wine.

Charles. Except yourself, dear despot, all
Have done their best to hum or squall;
But if your beautyship would condescend
To teach us what true melody might be,
There's not a creature present but would lend
His ears to listen for a century.

Helen. Sir, I respect you for your flattery;
All compliments of course are strange to me;

The moral strength required for flattery now,
To a fair queen is great you must allow :
I only envy you the power to make them.

Charles. 'Tis sure the better part to take them.

Helen. We don't believe them when you pay them.

Charles. Nor we when we say them.

No longer then, ladies, I pray,
At our flattery or fickleness grieve ;
If you never believe what we say,
We never say what we believe.

Helen. From our rule and example, gentles, learn,
And lay this to your hearts each one in turn ;
Pay compliments, pay visits, pay respects,
But pay your just debts first.

Harry. Our whole effects !

Helen. The royal rule of pure equality,
In complaisance and kindness, still shall be
Confided in, and revered by me ;
So shall my deed of abdication make
All love the loser for the losing's sake.
Attend ! my song the constancy discovers
Of a right royal pair of lovers.

Come, beloved, let us roam
Forth into the golden fields ;
You high palæe marks our home,
Ours is all that nature yields ;
Come, betrothed and espoused,
Earth is rising towards the sun,
And with light and joy aroused
Meets the love within us one.
Open now thy sleep-dewed eyes,
Show the subject soul its queen ;
Brighter than the new born skies
Their delicious depths I ween.
Don thee, love, thy royal white ;
Needs no more divine array ;
Fairer than the morning light,
Rule thou ever with the day.
Come the morrow, day divine,
All shall wake and bless the sun ;
Those thou lovest shall be mine,
They and thou and I be one ;
Crown and throne the world shall gain,
Thou the universal state ;
Bride of beauty ! rise and reign,
Love thy life, and Heaven thy fate.

Charles. The meaning whereof as I take it,—

Helen. True; it's exactly what you make it.

George. There's only one thing wanting that could
mend

That song;—a blaze of fireworks at the end.

Helen. Farewell, friends! let us hope to meet again
When others may be present whom we know.

Edward. Adieu! ye semideities! in vain
The world may worship idols.

George. Pray, do go!—

Walter. At last the so-called soulless have departed,
Leaving sundry broken-hearted.

Frederic. To make the life of perfect mould,
Like that in Paradise of old,
Each must give their better part;
We our soul and they their heart.

Laurence. The night hath gone, and all the stars
Have vanished at the sun's bright warning;
Still the moon, ghost-like, haunts the Heaven,
As though she deemed to her 'twas given:
What hath the moon to do with morning?
So love is fled, and all the fair
Gone; some with smiling, some with scorning,
Save one the fairest far above:
But what have I to do with love,
More than the moon hath with the morning?
The moon hath lost her light, and seems
To dim the scene she was once adorning:
So my poor heart, its lovelight gone,
Still in the Heavens where late it shone,
Lags like the moon upon the morning.
But I am likest to that moon in this,
That I am brightest when my love's away;
For when with her my borrowed light is lost,
As is the moon's amid the dazzling day.

Harry. Come pass the ruby round. There's nought
so dull

As to behold a noble vessel full
Of radiant blessings halt upon its way;
So fairly give and fairly take, I say.
Progress is nature's unexcepted law;
'Twere better e'en to go from bad to worse,

Than 'tween two like degrees of ill see-saw ;
Stagnation is an universal curse.

There is nothing stands still—so old sages declare,
But the world's ever changing in earth, sea, and air ;
All the powers of nature, in truth if we trace,
What are they ?—what are they, but running a race ?
The winds from all quarters career through the sky ;
They blow hot, they blow cold, they blow swift, they
blow high ;

They follow, they flank, and they fly in our face ;
What are they ?—what are they, but running a race ?
The rivers that run to the ends of the earth,
Flow thousands of miles from the place of their birth ;
From the old and the new world they pour out apace ;
What are they ?—what are they, but running a race ?
The worlds they call wanderers, rolling on high,
That enlighten the earth and enliven the sky ;
Going hundreds of miles in a minute through space ;
What are they ?—what are they, but running a race ?
Then with goblets before us, whatever they hold,
Let the hue of the nectar be purple, be gold,—
Let us say as we sit among friends, face to face,
What are they ?—what are they, but running a race ?

Laurence. All this is lively. Beauty, love, and mirth
Might seem to flavour even vapid earth
To a pure spirit's lips. For my own part,
I own it sinks life deeper in my heart,
At every fresh recurrence : but at times
A thought comes tolling o'er the darkened soul
Which we dare hardly guest ; but ill it chimes
With scenes of joy like this, which from the roll
Of memory we too oft would fain erase.

George. Not I, one jot, save your ill-omened face.

Walter. For sacred riddles this is neither time nor
place.

Laurence. No ; but of earth some sacred writings tell
Its flower was paradise, its fruit was hell.
Such is the fruit of worldly pleasure now ;
And thus perhaps my meaning you may trace.

Harry. We do ; but think it useless to avow
Such views at festive moments like the present.

Charles. Indeed they call up notions quite unpleasant.

So, let us rout them by another draught,
And thoughts bright as the beverage quaffed.

Harry. The future is the world of youth—

The future is our joy ;

We dream of honour, love, and truth,

And bliss without alloy.

But harp not now on love or truth,

Forget your dreams of glory ;

The wine will double us our youth ;

To-morrow dream again of sooth ;

But now to what's before ye.

Oh ! age will cloud youth's sunny brow,

And sorrows plough the cheek ;

The mirth we spread, the joy we know,

Then it will be vain to seek.

The old say, life has more of ill

Than good—of grief, than gladness ; still,

Within our cup one drop of joy,

Too small, if not too sweet, to eloy,

Always doth remain.

With us it shall be more than love,

Or fame, or faith, or gain ;

And sweet as Heaven's own fruit above

The common sweeteners of life's bitter grain.

Yes ! yes ! the memory of this night,

In age's veriest midnight hours,

Shall flash on our minds with a northern-light light,

And a prelude of pleasure illumine the night,

Whose morn we shall breathe in immortal bowers.

Charles. Some say Truth lies in water, some in wine ;
Suppose I mix them ; now she must be mine.

Frank. Nothing again will serve to make us merry.

Frederie. 'Twas stupid in you, Laurence.

Laurence. Was it ?

Will.

Very.

Edward. Infernal cant you'll always find
Upsets all pleasant parties of this kind.

George. He has put the company, 'tis plain, to flight.

Walter. And so I say—

Charles. I'm going, too.

All.

Good night !

SCENE—*A Visit.*FESTUS and HELEN: *afterwards* LUCIFER.

Helen. Come to the light, love! Let me look on thee.
 Let me make sure I have thee. Is it thou?
 Is this thy hand? Are these thy velvet lips,—
 Thy lips so lovable? Nay, speak not yet!
 For oft as I have dreamed of thee, it was
 Thy speaking woke me. I will dream no more.
 Am I alive? And do I really look
 Upon these soft and sea-blue eyes of thine,
 Wherein I half believe I can espy
 The riches of the sea? Nay, heavenly hued
 As though they had gained from gazing on the skies
 Their high and starry beauty. These dark rolled locks!
 Oh God! art Thou not glad, too, he is here?—
 Where hast thou been so long? Never to hear,
 Never to see, nor see one who had seen thee—
 Come now, confess it was not kind to treat
 Me in this manner.

Festus. I confess, my love.
 But I have been where neither tongue, nor pen,
 Nor hand could give thee token where I was;
 And seen,—but 'tis enough! I see thee now.
 I would rather look upon thy shadow there,
 Than Heaven's bright thrones for ever.

Helen. Where hast been?

Festus. Say, am I altered?

Helen. Nowise.

Festus. It is well.

Then in the resurrection we may know
 Each other. I have been among the worlds,
 Angels and spirits bodiless.

Helen. Great God;
 Can it be so?

Festus. It is:—and that both here
 And elsewhere. When the stars come, thou shalt see
 The track I travelled through the light of night;
 Where I have been, and whence my visitors.

Helen. And thou hast been with angels all the while,
And still dost love me?

Festus. Constantly as now.
But for the time I did devote my soul
To their divine society, I knew
Thou wouldst forgive, yet dared not trust myself
To see thee, or to pen one word, for fear
Thy love should overpower the plan conceived,
And acting, in my mind, of visiting
The spirits in their space-embosomed homes.

Helen. Forgive thee! 'tis a deed which merits love.
And should I not be proud, too, who can say,
For me he left all angels?

Festus. I forethought
So thou wouldst say; but with an offering
Came I provided, even with a trophy
Of love angelic, given me for thee;
For angel bosoms know no jealousy.

Helen. Shew me.

Festus. It is of jewels I received
From one who snatched them from the richest wreck
Of matter ever made, the holiest
And most resplendent.

Helen. Why, what could it be?
Jewels are baubles only; whether pearls
From the sea's lightless depths, or diamonds
Culled from the mountain's crown, or chrysolith,
Cat's eye or moonstone, or hot carbuncle,
That from the bed of Eden's sunniest stream
Extracted, lamped the ark, what time the roar
Of lions pining for their free sands, smote
The hungry darkness,—toys are they at best.
Jewels are not of all things in my sight
Most precious.

Festus. Nor in mine. It is in the use
Of which they may be made their value lies;
In the pure thoughts of beauty they call up,
And qualities they emblem. So in that
Thou wearest there, thy cross;—to me it is
Suggestive of bright thoughts and hopes in Him
Whose one great sacrifice availeth all,
Living and dead, through all eternity.

Not to the wanderer over southern seas
 Rises the constellation of the Cross
 More lovelily o'er sky and calm blue wave,
 Than does to me that bright one on thy breast.
 As diamonds are purest of all things,
 And but embodied light which fire consumes
 And renders back to air, that nought remains;
 And as the cross is symbol of our creed,
 So let that ornament signify to thee
 The faith of Christ, all purity, all light,
 Through fervency resolving into Heaven.
 Each hath his cross, fair lady, on his heart;
 Never may thine be heavier or darker
 Than that now on thy breast, so light and bright,
 Rising and falling with its bosom-swell.

Helen. I thank thee for that wish, and for the love
 Which prompts it—the immeasurable love
 I know is mine, and I with none would share.
 Forgive me; I have not yet felt my wings.
 Now have I not been patient? Let me see
 My promised present.

Festus. Look, then—they are here;
 Bracelets of chrysoprase.

Helen. Most beautiful!
 Henceforth to me these gems more dear shall be,
 More sacred than to followers of Islam,
 The diamond star, where, under golden pall,
 The prophet lies of kingless Arabie;
 Than that mysterious stone which Japhet's son
 Stole from his grandsire, weather foul and fair
 Ruling, the tempest generating gem;
 Than the green brilliance of that luminous throne,
 Carved from a block of emerald, whereon once
 Sat young Vieija, king of solar blood,
 Mid towers palatial by the pearly seas
 Reared æry; topped now by swart diver's heel;
 Than those which decked the standard lost for aye
 To Persia, and the proud Iranian line,
 At Kadesieh, where Khaled, sword of God,
 The victory gained of victories; and those gems
 Doled to his hosts, for every warrior one;
 Though these more numerous than the wingéd cloud,

Which flays a province of its greenery
 Yea, than that solar jewel, one solid spark
 Erupted from the sun, which rife with all
 Mysterious powers and virtues, Krishna sought
 In the bear-guarded caverns of the north ;
 And fought for, one long moon, both night and day,
 Ere he could gain triumphant ;—gem divine ;
 Their every gleam shall thank thee, they are mine.

Festus. Come, let me clasp them, dearest, on thine
 arms ;

For these of those are worthy, and are named
 In the foundation stones of the bright city,
 Which is to be for the immortal saved,
 Their last and blest abode ; and such their hue,
 The golden green of paradisa! plains
 Which lie about it boundlessly, and more
 Intensely tinted with the burning beauty
 Of God's eye, which alone doth light that land,
 Than our earth's cold grass garment with the sun ;
 Though even in the bright, hot, blue-skied East,
 Where he doth live the life of light and Heaven ;
 Where, o'er the mountains, at midday is seen
 The morning star, and the moon tans at night
 The cheek of careless sleeper. Take them, love.
 There are no nobler earthly ornaments
 Than jewels of the city of the saved.

Helen. But how are these of that bright city ? I
 Am eager for their history.

Festus. They are
 Thereof prophetically, and have been—
 What I will shew thee presently, when I
 Relate the story of the angel who
 Gave them to me.

Helen. Well ; I will wait till then,
 Or any time thou chooseth : 'tis enough
 That I believe thee always ;—but would know,
 If not in me too curious to ask,
 How came about these miracles ? Hast thou raised
 The fiend of fiends, and made a compact dark,
 Sealed with thy blood, symbolic of the soul,
 Whereby all power is given thee for a time,
 All means, all knowledge, to make more secure

Thy spirit's dread perdition at the end?
 I of such awful stories oft have heard,
 And the unlawful lore which ruins souls.
 Myself have charms, foresee events in dreams;
 Can prophesy, prognosticate, know well
 The secret ties between many magic herbs
 And mortal feelings, nor condemn myself
 For knowing what is innocent; but thou!
 Thy helps are mightier far and more obscure.
 Was it with wand and circle, book and skull,
 With rites forbid and backward-jabbered prayers,
 In cross-roads or in church-yard, at full moon,
 And by instruction of the ghostly dead,
 That thou hast wrought these wonders, and attained
 Such high transcendent powers and secrets? Speak!
 Or is man's mastery over spirits not
 Of such a vile and vulgar consequence?

Festus. Were not my heart as guiltless of all mirth
 As is the oracle of an extinct god
 Of its priest-prompted answer, I might smile
 To list such askings. Mind's command o'er mind,
 Spirit's o'er spirit, is the clear effect
 And natural action of an inward gift,
 Given of God, whereby the incarnate soul
 Hath power to pass free out of earth and death,
 To immortality and Heaven, and mate
 With beings of a kind, condition, lot,
 All diverse from its own. This mastery
 Means but communion, the power to quit
 Life's little globule here, and coalesce
 With the great mass about us. For the rest,
 To raise the devil were an infant's task
 To that of raising man. Why, every one
 Conjures the Fiend from hell into himself
 When passion chokes or blinds him. Sin is hell.

Helen. How dost thou bring a spirit to thee, Festus?

Festus. It is my will which makes it visible.

Helen. What are those like whom thou hast seen?

Festus. They come,

The denizens of other worlds, arrayed
 In diverse form and feature, mostly lovely;
 In limb and wing ethereal finer far

Than an ephemeris' pinion ; others, armed
 With gleaming plumes, that might o'ercome an air
 Of adamantine denseness, pranked with fire.
 All are of different offices and strengths,
 Powers, orders, tendencies, in like degrees
 As men, with even more variety ;
 Of different glories, duties, and delights.
 Even as the light of meteor, satellite,
 Planet and comet, sun, star, nebula,
 Differ, and nature also, so do theirs.
 With them is neither need, nor sex, nor age,
 Nor generation, growth, decay, nor death ;
 Or none whom I have known ; there may be such ;
 Mature they are created and complete,
 Or seem to be. Perfect from God they come.
 Yet have they different degrees of beauty,
 Even as strength and holy excellence.
 Sexless are angels, but the mental seals
 Of either holy kind in all prevail.
 Some seem of milder and more feminine
 Nature than others, Beauty's proper sex,
 Shewn but by softer qualities of soul,
 More lovable than awful ; more devote
 To deeds of individual piety,
 And grace, than mighty missions fit to task
 Sublimest spirits, or the toil intense
 Of cultivating nations of their kind ;
 Or working out from the problem of the world
 The great results of God,—result, sum, cause.
 These oft-times charged with delegated powers,
 Formative or destructive ; those in chief,
 Ordained to better and to beautify
 Existence as it is ; with careful love
 To tend upon particular worlds or souls ;
 Warning and training whom they love, to tread
 The soft and blossom-bordered, silvery paths,
 Which lead and lure the soul to paradise,
 Making the feet shine which do walk on them ;
 While each doth God's great will alike, and both
 With their whole nature's fulness love His works.
 To love them lifts the soul to Heaven.

Helen.

Let me, then!

Whence come they ?

Festus.

Many of them come from orbs

Wherein the rudest matter is more worth
And fair than queenly gem; the dullest dust
Beneath their feet is rosy diamond:—
Others, direct from Heaven; but all in high
And serious love towards those to whom they come.
None but the blessed are free to visit where
They choose. The lost are slaves for ever; here
Never but on their Master's mereiless
Business, nor elsewhere. Still sometimes with these
Dark spirits have I held communion,
And in their soul's deep shadow, as within
A mountain cavern of the moon, conversed.
With them, and wormed from them the gnawing truth
Of their extreme perdition; marking oft
Nature revealed by torture, as a leaf
Unfolds itself in fire and writhes the while,
Burning, yet unconsumed. Others there are
Come garlanded with flowers unwithering,
Or crowned with sunny jewels, clad in light,
And girded with the lightning; in their hands
Wands of pure rays or arrowy starbeams; some
Bright as the sun self-lit, in stature tall,
Strong, straight, and splendid as the golden reed
Whereby the height, and length, and breadth, and depth,
Of the descendent city of the skies,
In which God sometimes shall make glad with man,
Were measured by the angel;—the same reed
Wherewith our Lord was mocked that angel found
Close by the cross and took; God made it gold,
And now it makes the sceptre of His Son
Over all worlds; the sole bright rule of Heaven,
The measure of immortal life, the scale
Of power, love, bliss, and glory infinite;—
Some gorgeous and giantie, who with wings
Wide as the wings of armies in the field,
Drawn out for death, sweep over Heaven; and eyes
Deep, dark as sea-worn caverns, with a toreh
At the end, far back, glaring. Some with wings
Like an unfainting rainbow, studded round
With stones of every hue and excellence,
Writ o'er with mystic words which none may read,
But those to whom their spiritual state

Gives correlative meaning, fit thereto.
Some of these visit me in dreams ; with some
Have I made one in visions, in their own
Abodes of brightness, blessedness, and power ;
And know moreover I shall joy with them,
Ere long their sacred guest, through ages yet
To come, in worlds not now perhaps create,
As they have been mine here : and some of them,
In unimaginable splendours I
Have walked with through their wingéd worlds of light,
Double and triple particoloured suns,
And systems circling each the other, clad
In tints of light and air, whereto this earth
Hath nothing like, and man no knowledge of :
Orbs heaped with mountains, to the which ours are
Mere grave mounds, and their skies flowered with stars,
Violet, rose or pearl-hued, or soft blue,
Golden or green, the light now blended, now
Alternate ; many moons and planets, full,
Crescent, or gibbous-phased illumining,
In periodic and intricate beauty,
At once those strange and most felicitous skies.
According to the nature of those spheres
Their natives are ; some human-like, and some
Of great gigantic grace and happiest air,
Yet solemn as the sun ; they walk like winds,
Whose dwelling is all immaterial space,
And vanish slowly in the hollow Heavens.
Some of still vaster size and mightier mien,
Whose movement is as thunder in a cloud
Devouring space ; some like to flickering ghosts
Of fire, while underneath their every step
Spring perfumes up and flowers, bedight in rays
Aerial of the purest, brightest skies ;—
Others of sanguine hue whose step is like
An instantaneous trembling of the Heavens ;
Others again whose forms for utter bright
Are indefinable ; from place to place
Their feet pass like the twinklings of the stars ;
Some of a cold, pure bodily rayonnance
As is the moon's of naked light, ungarbed
In circumspherical air, who glide like clouds ;

And some in bands, some singly, some in groups;
 For all perchance is starlife after death;
 While others sworded, sceptred, crowned, and robed,
 Spirits of power who rule each one his star,
 Spirits who through all time have hoped and seen
 Through godless darkness and deistic dawn
 The solar revelation of Heaven's light;—
 Spirits whose form is fire, whose life is strength,
 Precipitate as tempests are :—to these
 Add what gives earnest of inferior life,
 Eagle, dove, lion, lamb, ox, serpent, horse;
 Nor lightly estimate such signs, but mind
 The potent meaning of the simplest sign,
 To one whose mind is meaning to itself.
 For angels can assume the form they please,
 And transform things inanimate, as once
 With earth's angelic watcher I beheld.
 The lonely diamond which decked her pale
 Transparent brow was worth a mansion; worth
 A mine and an estate; so pure and clear,
 All globular and gloriously sized,
 Like one large drop of paradisal dew
 Immortalized, it shone; and so it was,
 Which from a leaf she gathered of the tree
 Of perfect life on Eden's natal morn.

Helen. How I should love to visit other worlds,
 Or see an angel!

Festus. Wilt thou now?

Helen. I dare not.

Not now at least. I am not in the mood.
 Ere I behold a spirit I would pray.

Festus. Light as a leaf they step, or arrowy
 Footing of breeze upon a waveless pool;
 Sudden and soft, too, like a waft of light,
 The beautiful immortals come to me;
 Oh, ever lovely, ever welcome they!

Helen. Thou speakest me of visions: I would learn
 The nature of all spiritual things.

Festus. Matter and mind comprise the universe,
 All conscious nature and self conscious art,
 As the twin tidal wave inarms the world.
 Spirit and nature act contrariwise,

Yet harmonize in contrariety.
Now it is earth which riseth towards the sun
And not the sun on earth : yet let us deem
God seeketh us, illuminating life ;
Not that it is our earth rise into Heaven,
Forced by orbital reason towards the truth
Even when retrogressive. In the pure
Black, lifeless void, no star is to be seen,
Nothing but nothing seeming palpable.
It is only through their sensuous atmospheres
That worlds can view each other, or that light
Itself becomes enlightening. So with man.
So brightest stars are but the darkest dust
Illumined from without ; and central fire
Is self consummative of death alone :
So light all colourless all colours holds.
Art is man's nature, nature is God's art :
Eternal this, that temporal ; and thus
Soul in itself may realize all time,
By indagation of supremest spheres
Material and spiritual, born
Of effluent or influent Deity ;
Whereby the universe revolves round God
In everlasting period,—He Himself
Conceiving, bearing, suffering, ending all,
Affiliating and inheavening :—power
And means vouched heretofore to some, and now
To him who words the wonders he hath seen.
There is a secret sign whereby the soul
Feels certainty of safety and of power
Imparted, public to the universe,
Which then looks joyful as in sight of rest,
And yet untwist of by a single world ;
Infallible to one who hath received
The birthright of the death-begotten life ;
Stamped in the spirit, as the gleaming seal
Upon the brows of those imparadised,
The true trilateral monogram of God.
High o'er the sensible Heavens translated far,
Beyond the interchanging universe
Of sense and substance, body, life and death,
And deathfulness of evil, being's bane,

The soul to whom this sign is given lives;
And is a soul of the first magnitude.
All truth is vague, all error is distinct:
One being less, one greater than man's soul:
Whereof the true transfiguration takes
Place, and reception in supernal truth,
When we view all things from a point of Heaven
Opposed to the world's wisest certainty.
For then all bright, high, seeming-scattered thoughts,
By ardent contemplation, star themselves
Into the shapes which Faith and Reason love
To fill up with a Heaven of their own.
The world is as a great sarcophagus,
Engraven inwardly and outwardly
With living emblems of its inner life,
And soul containing tenant of all time.
The same hath infinite meanings as the work
Of spirit, and tenure of humanity;
Backwards to God and forwards read for man:
Oft differ text and order; wise is he
Who scans and construes all in harmony.
A sacred side there is to every thing,
As given or forbidden, false or true;
According to the greater truth involved
One side is always bright, one always dark,
Leaflike and moonlike; and each separate life
Is as a leaf which waits the shining breath
Of nature, our mysterious prophetess,
To give it its due order in the world.
But as God's own true name is uttered not,
If known, in Heaven the highest, nor on earth;
So too there are innominable depths,
Which cannot be revealed, of human life,
And ought not if they could; the elements
Of the premortal manhood which inhered
In the conception of creative mind;
Since shewn to few and only dimly known.
Speech is divine, but silence Deity.
As sleep in life, and dreams in sleep, is truth
In dreams to man. Many, the greatest, truths
Have been made known in visions or in dreams.
For then it is the soul recalls the spheres

Of preëxistent nature, and evokes
The ghosts of coming ages, or unites
Passed, present, future, in one windlike touch
Which loosens the world's zone and renders mind
The master of creation. Be it so!
Once I received a vision—for the crown
Of nature is passivity, and our
Best mood the pure recipient—in a state
Of twilight-like existence, such as that
Of universal substance when the sun,
And light, and darkness, moon, and Heaven, and earth,
Were nigh all one, and nought distinct save souls,
Echoes of Light, reacting Heavenwardly.
It was the spirit of the universe,
Whose breast was of like hemispheres of bliss,
Whereon the worlds were nursed, that I beheld.
The fragrance of the fadeless fields of Heaven,
The endless blessings of an act of grace,
Or mercy's matron bosom filled her words;
And each articulate air she did expire,
O'erladen with the lore of ages, e'en
As earth was with her old baptismal flood.
In her deep eye immortal quiet dwelled,
As though all Heaven had settled on one star.
She spake, and I regarded with such awe
As eaglet when he first beholds the sun.
And though what I remember be all true,
Yet in so far as worded it is not
The entire truth uncircumscribable;
Can a spar speak how it was crystallized?
She spake, I said, the spirit, and at her word
Behold the Heavens were opened as a book.
I am the world-soul, nature's spirit I.
Ere universe or constellation was,
System, or sun, or orb, or element,
Darkness, or light, or atom, I first lived;
I and necessity, though twain in life,
Yet one in Being. Time and life are one:
But insomuch as nature is destroyed
In God's assumption to Divine estate
Of an especial soul, necessity
Ends in extreme original nothingness;

And leaves all supernatural existence free,
As breath in air, like-natured with the same,
Yet altered in condition, function, form,
And glorified. God is, and men exist.
Free agency extends 'tween man and man,
And every finite nature ; between God
And man, and every finite being, fate.
What is divine is of necessity free.
I heard, and I received, and from my soul,
Intense in quiet, perfect in repose,
Like sleep's fantastic frost-work melted death ;
And entering straight the heaven-surrounding state
Of deified existence among gods,
It grew ignited with divinity.
Again the world-soul voiced itself, and I
Drank in the fruitful glories of her words,
As earth consumes the golden skiey clouds.
Two books there are which must be read ; the one
Wherein the elements exist as leaves,
And all the worlds as signs and symbols ; thus
Earth is the symbol of humanity,
Water of spirit, fire of Deity,
And air of all things ; stars the truths of Heaven.
Water and fire are elements divine ;
Earth and air human ; Heaven and the soul
From one proceed, and the blue heated skies ;
Out of the other, body and abode.
The sun too symbols spirit, and the moon
Soul, and the earth life-essence through all space ;
And agents of destruction like the flood,
Presign regeneration ; also fire.
This present is the result of what is passed
And coming, but the temporal present only ;
The eternal present is before both passed
And future, and posterior to them both :
And these are verified in the Eterne,
In act as in religion ; thus in man ;
Judgment is life, and memory like death,
Imagination immortality.
The actual and ideal meet but once,
Where pure impossibilities are facts.
Judge doubtful things by certainest, and dark

By what is clear, and dangerous by safe ;
And prophesy of God to all which live,
And aboriginal Heaven. And of the soul,
The other tome I spake of, believe thou,
Body surrounds the human soul as in
Divine nature, which is its contrary,
God's infinite spirit bounds the universe.
For Thy creation, although infinite,
Is infinitely less than Thee, O God !
Thine is the spirit, and the soul is Thine,
And all the thousand instincts of the heart.
The universe is simple ; God and I
Cause and effect, are all that in it is ;
And more ; for Cause containeth its effect.
Cause, operation, and effect, are God,
Nature, and man : which both partake of one.
Through error human souls accept the truth,
As through distorting air, the light whereby
They live, of sun or star ; and thus through time,
And ceaseless as the pulsings of the blood,
The inspiration of the spirit acts
In one or other's bosom. Through the world
The soul receives God, but from God, the soul
Receives the spirit ; thus the chosen, thus the world ;
The cloud-led many, the star-guided wise ;
For spirit makes all time and nature clear,
As of old, water purified by fire.
Methought I answered, as it might be, thus.
Life, like a floating island, comes and goes,
We know not, mean not how. From Heaven to earth
A star falls, and we track a cold dark mass
Of trembling half-transparent somethingness,
Which is, in our conception, as unlike
All astral issue and celestial birth,
As wind is unlike wisdom ; thunder, snow.
We know not that we are, nor how, nor why.
The distance between finite, howsoe'er
Great, and the infinite is infinite.
Our life is incomplete and sectional ;
And the large unity of all we seek
In vain to realize ; yet much we strive ;
And every ideal of union,

Which youth makes to itself, is beautiful,
Or blissful, mostly. Still through every sign,
From morn all musical to blank starred night,
Death's wolflike shadow haunts the vital orb;
With spectral darkness, and eclipse of life,
Freezing the fiery marrow of the world.
While yet these words were vibrant on my tongue,
I saw the sun-god stall his flaming steeds
In customary splendour; which, in turn,
Shaking their lightning trappings off to earth,
And snatching a few golden grains of sleep,
Solaced them with their corner in the west;
Towards where earth uplifts her crystal crown,
White with all yearéd snows and radiant rime;
While ever and again the dancing morn,
Even in the mid abyss of solar night,
With roseate blaze impowers the shining skies,
And pure prismatic fire, that lights the stars.
Stretching her hand into the nebulous depths
Of everlasting space, again the spirit spake.
As the ætherial essence of the world,
Whereof all matter is mere increment,
Speak I in truth to thee; and now of earth;
For as there is one Father of all things,
And as of spirit is all action born,
So of one substance is all nature made.
Regard not earth as the whole universe,
Nor minify the orb into a point
Where all relations vanish. Earth receives
In an immortal influence, and gives back,
Out of her bright and generative heart,
To all that is therein conceived, and born
Of her exuberant bosom inwardly,
The vital virtues of the potent Heavens;
Backwards and forwards passing, night and day,
With an invisible radiance filling up
The interstitial skies. To all the forms
Of plant, fish, brute, bird, insect, and the lives
Insensible and unconceived, which were,
One time, as living continents, whereof
The elemental matter of the world
Is mainly made, so that men live on life—

Round to tyrannic man, whose soul's composed
Of diverse powers and passions, He who made,
Out of life's infinite estate, doth give
To all these forms renewal in the mass
Ceaseless; to man alone a personal
Regeneration; for as true as it is
That all are generated, so like surely
All are to be regenerated; all
Differ among each other in degree,
Of beauty, eminence, vitality;
The individuals of each species, too,
Among themselves. If some excel, the rest
Suffer not therefore. Wrong to none is wrought
By honour to a high peculiar few,
Self-meritless, whose whole position stands
Ingenerable by themselves. Exists
This class eclect in all things; best in man;
In whom the motional music of the Heavens,
The elemental workings of the world,
Upward and downward, circular and plane,
The spirit pure impassible of fire,
Are symbolled all in sunlike excellence
Behold! the spirit said and I beheld
Earth; the horizon black with numberless
Men; and a mountainous altar high amidst,
Shaped like a vast inverted pyramid,
Whereby four forms stood: one arrayed in white;
And one in uniformal black; in green
The third; and of all hues the fourth. And most
I marked at first the two first-named. All bliss
Each claimed as his alone, denouncing one
The other:—both all warning that fierce fire
Burned for their sake who sware not by a creed
Garbled, patched up and contradictory;
Confounding text and comment, with no rule
Interpretative; now as literal,
Now figurative holding laws like plain;
Which where most true impracticable were,
Where possible, intolerable. Love
Nathless they said, this pair, from first to last
Being its Author's nature; infinite
Love to a mortal creature, the sole cause

Which prompted God to sacrifice His Son,
In order that like infinite return
Of glory and of blessing might accrue
To the enfranchised universe ; their creeds
And deeds as arctic from antarctic wide.
At either side they stood and pressed the world ;
And prayed right earnestly and honestly
All men to serve God and obey the law,
Accept of Heaven's free grace, and something do
To help God in the saving of their souls.
And myriads sought their several priestly sides,
And did as was enjoined them, and rejoiced.
Then something passed between them, and the twain
Ceasing opponent duarchy atoned
In friendship for past enmity ; and straight
Culling all contraries from holy grounds,
Built up an idol of all elements
Most disaccordant. Thus his deathly feet
They framed of fire, of earth his lower limbs,
His upper part of water, his head air ;
And throned him on the broad and upturned base
Of that earth-piercing altar pyramid.
And round about him last a fane they reared,
To which all earth in divers modes gave aid ;
A circular temple patent to the sun,
Sea-lavared, mountain-columned, kingdom-paved.
When as he sat his throne there rose a shout
From the foregathered multitudes, which caused
The circumspatial skies shake, cold with dread,
And earth revibrate to her inmost base.
In his right hand he held the sun and moon,
And in his left a wingéd orb cross-crowned ;
Bare by his side hung down a sword of fire
Curved comet-wise. A rosary of stars
Decked either wrist. With stars his breast was mailed
Like to a knight's of old, with scales steel-gilt,
Or like an ice plant with perpetual dew,
Or diamond beetle round beglobed with light.
And the unsphered skies darkened momentarily.
To him was brought the world bound hand and foot,
Which more intently worshipped than the poor
Bewildered devoted of eastern lands,

Whose idol-car wheels roll through human dust,
His golden squatting demons diamond eyed.
Round that great altar thousand lessèr were,
Each one enringed with crowds. The monarch there,
Upon that central shrine where sate the god,
Laid down his crown; the warrior cast his sword;
The peer his glittering badge; the merchant prince
His hoarded coffer. There the statesman placed
His seal of power, the priest his robe, the bard
And the harmonious master lyre and pen;
Who soar or mine in science or in art,
Their elements, and implements, and gifts;
The scribe, and the physician, and the wright
His several offering. Thither hied the crowds
Of mediate millions between gain and toil;
Thither the brawny-armed and brown-browed hind,
Whose wealth was in his will and daily work,
Repaired; and earth's luxurious toilless tribes
Followed, with each their hands full of good things,
And felt their conscience lightened; blessed their lot,
And all went well and ended happily.
Those minor altars were the hate and scorn
Of the majestic pair who served the highest,
And sware athwart the cross to make all souls
Believe alike in clockworklike content.
Yet might they not. The many most succeed—
The great few fail; and among those few these.
Each leader held within his hand and read
Choice scraps to those about him, from the book
Whose words are volumes, and whose laws are life
To spiritual reason only. Hence
A countless train of misbeliefs arose,
Like pure parhelia, high above all power
Of man or priest to hinder or destroy.
Some of belief thought most; of practice some.
Some thought of God as darkness, some as light;
And worshipped each; some held that space was God;
While others said, and wisely, God is what?
Some held that God, and all the Heavenly powers,
As with the starry panarchy of space,
Were of one essence, like divine and high;
Some that the Word and Holy Spirit were

Deific functions only of one God :
 He who in Heaven was Father, was on earth
 Born as the Son, and, in the chosen twelve,
 Spake him as tonguéd fire ; conceiting thus ;
 God as the sun, His word our Lord, its light,
 And its all comforting heat the Holy Ghost.
 Some that the Deity first created Christ ;
 Christ, next, the Holy Spirit ; after whom,
 God by His Son made all things, Heaven and earth,
 Material and invisible ; He Himself
 O'er all supreme and incommunicable.
 Essence Divine is necessarily one,
 Simple and indivisible ; and the Trine
 Of Persons, like the attributes divine
 Of justice, wisdom, mercy, but the names
 Ideal of distinction, in our minds,
 Of Heaven's Supreme, considered in His acts
 As bearing on the universe ; He, one,
 Without plurality of principles ;
 Without diversity of parts, or persons.
 Some thought our Lord the Christ begot ere time,
 The one great creature of eternity ;
 And as so much than man or angel more,
 So much than God the less ; the Holy Ghost
 Proportioned least in infinite Deity.
 Some judged that God most High, eternal, sole,
 Willing the world to found, and knowing matter
 Unto the workings of His mighty hand,
 Could not be subject, first of all things made .
 One Being, whom He Logos called, or Son,
 To be a bond between the world and Him,
 By whom the mighty whole was after framed.
 But though the Word was Christ, and titled God,
 The Word was not as God, eterne ; that Christ
 Had nothing human in him but the flesh,
 Whereeto was joined the Logos, as the soul
 In man ; but as the first of things create,
 He preëxisted ere all times or worlds.
 Others, one nature only of the Word
 Incarnate, held in Christ ; His manly kind
 Being all absorbed in His Divinity ;
 His very body was celestial ;

And through maternal mysteries glided free,
As light through glass; though, after, both composed
One Theoändrine nature; arguing thence,
That not the manhood only of our Lord,
But His Divinity did both suffer and died.
Some thought the King of righteousness which met,
With bread and wine, the conquering Friend of God;
Higher than Christ in birth and office; this
Standing as mediator but of men;
That, intercessor of Heaven's angels lost.
Some the Divinity of the Holy Spirit
Denied; Deific energy diffused
Through nature deeming it, and indistinct
From God the Sire of all, and God the Son.
Some thought the Holy Ghost God feminine,
Of whom was born celestially the Son;
Mary, blessed Virgin, her incarnate type,
As Jesus of the Father. These averred
Our Lord's divinity not incarnate in
The Saviour's manhood, but attendant on;
And that as God could nor be born nor die,
Christ's mother was but mother of the man;
Mother of God, not: and the Holy Spirit
Was of the Father only. Truth is one,
Did we but know it; error, varied, vast.
Some that in mystical quaternity
All Deity existed; and the first
Ycleped Ineffable, and the last Truth;
Father and Son, gods intermediate.
Some deemed that He, the all-existent One,
Revolving all things orblike in Himself,
And future fates, abyss within abyss,
Through endless ages, hit at last on man
As the consummate accident of time,
And everlasting bubble, to whom were
Nought necessary save necessity.
These deemed that, wholly contemplating God,
The soul, suffused in Deity, required
No active virtue, but on God's own breast,
Lay lulled in glory, and in unitive
Life with divinity, its end fulfilled,
Inordinately happy. Some maintained

That it was necessary to believe
That whatsoe'er is done by men, is done
By God's spirit; and thence conclude no sin
Exists, unless to those who think it such;
And that to live without all doubt or dread,
Were to restore to life the paradise
Initiate of the soul—that pleasant place,
Erst deafforested—and realize
The catholic salvation of the world.
Some held that, now and then, there speaks in all
The word of God, His light enlightening all,
If not resisted carnally. Some judged
The evil of sin and punishment alike
Reflected on divine rule, if eterne;
And some believed, despite all threats of fire,
Here and hereafter, that the soul ere yet
Clad with the body had forelived in Heaven
A holy creature; but that sinning, earth
Was its amercement made, its prison flesh;
From which emerging, it shall gather back
Its preëxistence, and by grace resume
The heavenly powers belonging it: in dreams,
They said, dim glimpses come of blessed states,
And shadowings of power, which to the soul
Seem inborn and accustomed as a star,
When first immersed in light it leaves the sun.
Some held, and erred, that makers there were twain;
One good, one evil; that the soul was made
By the good Lord, the body by the bad,
And sin was fleshly: that the Lord of Life
Lived in the sun; the Holy Spirit air,
Wisdom the moon, the Father the abyss
Of light inhabited; that Christ was Eve's
Tempter in Eden; that baptismal rites
Should be performed with fire, and milk and wine
Be held accurséd. Some believed two souls
In every man; celestial this, and that
Infernal, but expellable by prayer
And holy habit, fasting, watching, alms.
Some thought the Christian world to reconcile,
And Heathendom and Jewry, by a creed
Of one eternal Father-God, and two

Christs ; one in Heaven, the other born on earth ;
And that the Holy Spirit, Wisdom, was
The sister of the Son. Some held that He
And Satan were two lower powers, whom God
Had pitted 'gainst each other during time ;
But that the final conquest is the Lord's.
Others that, at His second coming, Christ
Would give His saints a carnal paradise ;
Nothing in Being vying with that vast
Impossibility. Some deemed our Lord
Alone was God, the Father and the Spirit ;
And some that He was simply best of men ;
Others that Christ was God and Jesus man ;
Believing not the aforetime unity
Of the Divine and human. Some maintained
That each believer was himself a Christ ;
Some that the mortal mother of our Lord
A goddess was, and sacrificed to her,
Pretemporal, immortal. Some believed
The person of our Saviour, while on earth,
Was everywhere at once, and that the same,
At His ascension, settled in the sun.
Some that the Deity corporeal lived ;
And that the body of the universe
With him was coeternal. Some that Christ
Received His flesh-frame of the elements,
Which at His death He paid back to the world,
And rose to Heaven incorporal. Others deemed
His body was a dreary phantom only,
Impassible of pain, or thirst, or death ;
Making the love of God of no effect,
And thus the deicidal tribes made quit :
The deeds of nations being thoughts of God.
Others that Deity in bread and wine,
Made into consecrated elements,
Resided ; round it some, some under it ;
As though the hand of man imparted God.
Some thought perfection still attainable
In this life, and with these means, as in Heaven ;
And that with man it rests to reinstate
The Adamic Eden, and by converse pure,
And holy life, redeem the sacred day,

When nature's every work was miracle ;
When man, and brute, and angel all communed
In happy ease, and fruits made good and wise ;
As ere the immortal seraph-serpent stung
Heaven's virgin star, or brake young nature's seal,
Or left his lightning trail through all divine
Traditions, and became what now he is,
The spiritual discord of all life ;
But ah ! from that primitival world to this,—
From Eden to Chaldæa what a change,
From Paradise to Persia ! Some eschewed
All earth-lore, and would have that God required
Good deeds alone from men ; some that nor law
Nor gospel profited the human soul ;
That good works furthered not, ill hindered not
Salvation ; but pure faith alone sufficed ;—
Others that neither worship, work, nor faith
Was requisite ; that war and socialty
Were equal evils ; and that marriage was
Nor type, nor bond, nor good, but simple sin.
Some said all deadly sin was past church power
To pardon, even on due penitence ;
And that the blessed twelve could never hope
Of aught but venial sins to be released,
Even of God Himself. And two there were
Of mortal men who deemed that they, the last
God witnesses on earth, could save or damn
Whome'er they willed ; false birth of falsity !
Conformably to faith they lived and died,
Their souls absorbed of darkness, brides of death ;
For over all Death works his hellish will.
Some thought the gates of Heaven were sealed to all
Until the great re-rising ; some that the world
Was made by angels only, and not by God,
Who would not with aught earthly soil His hand.
Some in annihilation placed their hope,
Wherein to be absorbed was bliss thrice blessed ;
And deified the devil in their hearts,
In dreams of everlasting nothingness.
Some thought a kind indifference towards aught
Which haps in this life, and full consciousness
Of blessed necessity in every act,

And charity in all opined of man,
Made true religion and philosophy.
Some grains of truth-gold, some few lines of life,
Starring the vast formations of the false ;
And for thus meddling with these mysteries
Unmeant by Heaven to be cleared up on earth ;
Outtaking those who have eyes trained to see,
Nor all its scriptural darknesses illumed,
Those twin compellers of conformity,
Erst marked, condemned from time to time, to hell,
Rack, massacre, and fire each bubble sect
Which rose in full-blown emptiness, to shew
Their own familiar charity, and prove
The inspiration which they claim of God,
Who tells all, He is love. Those sects themselves,
Full of molecular motion, fought like mites
Which fill a water-drop, and day by day
Consumed or cursed each other. For the rest
Who stood round the great altar saying creeds,
And each had his dissenting heretics,
The third one simply smote by the sword-edge
All who dared doubt his darkly chequered tale,
Which was nor very truth nor very lie,
But hung suspended between Heaven and earth,
Baseless as utter void. The fourth was meek
In mood, as ignorant as tolerant ;
Though every now and then he closed his eyes
And rose, and slew promiscuously round.
The various modes of practice next I marked,
Wherein devoutest trust is oft-times placed
Among mankind, and much my mind was moved ;
And my soul sank within me like a star
Sea-setting, when it leaves all Heaven behind.
Some burned, some drowned, some maimed, some clammed
themselves,
Or others, all in proof of piety ;
Some sacrificed their children, some their sires ;
Some fruits, some flowers, beasts, and the young of beasts ;
In honest, obstinate hope of earning Heaven.
Others heaped stone on stone, and shrine on shrine,
To mock the span of Heaven and the stars ;
Silver inlaid with gold, gold decked with gem.

Others dug out the earth and worshipped fumes,
And paid respect to vapours which inhaled
Bred holy inspiration. Some in warm
And reeking entrails read the signs of God,
Or deemed they did, prophetic. Others sun,
And moon, and stars, or fixed or wandering,
Adored, in the belief that through them came
Vast spiritual inflow : earth-born fire
Or sun-born, rivers, mountains, seas, stones, herbs,
Brute, insect, fish, bird, earth, and air, and man ;
All these were sworn by, prayed to, in the wild
Sad faith, that man's humanity by them
Could gain some earnest of divinity.
Some only ate of certain meats, or laid
Under dread ban all flesh and milk and wine,
Extolling green food and the sparkling spring ;
As though brutes only spiritually lived,
And virtue were a vegetable thing.
Others wore iron spikes around their waists,
Burned fire in their bosoms, with their bread
Mixed dust and filth, ate grass, and naked lived,
Or crawled for leagues, like serpents, in the dust,
In sign of self-abasement. Base indeed
Such writhings to propitiate our God,
In whom was perfected all sacrifice,
All penalty, all humblement, all death ;
He who was God in Heaven ere man on earth ;
Who left His universal work complete,
The spiritual as the natural,
When at His bright ascent to Heaven He gave
A second sabbath to the universe ;
Who of His own free will gives life to all ;
And once too of His own free choice chose death,
That all might of necessity be free ;
Turning humanity into deity,
As water into wine, and saved the whole.
These things are true of all, some few except,
Versed in the ways of Heaven as are the stars,
Who through all time have trusted nought but God,
Whose seats are on the mounts of Paradise,
Hewn out of living rock, though here they feel
The flat deformity of creature life.

Once more I looked around, and hour by hour
The multitudes departed yet increased ;
But one way came they, countless ways they went ;
Through age, birth, pestilence, vice, folly, war,
Disease, excess, woe, famine, sin, and fate ;
And as I gazed, priest, altar, crowd, and god
Vanished and were no more. On earth's bright head
The dew of morn and even fell as wont,
The tear of sorrow and the tear of joy.
Behold now Heaven ! the spirit said and I
One vast and universal Heaven behold,
God's universal and perpetual smile,
Which harmonizing all things all o'erspreads.
There everything hath life, the elements
All vitalized, and glorified, and named
Love, wisdom, strength, and beauty ; and all hues
Which nature owns, from earth's original blush
To Heaven's eternal azure, hallowed are ;
While winds all musical and odorous,
Like breath of Deity, in sentient clouds,
The delicate chariots of journeying souls,
Issue their fruitful blessings round the skies.
There all exalting joys abide ; there flow
The fountains of eternal life and streams
Of perfect virtue for soul-baptism ;
There roll the wide abysmal mysteries
Yet luminous with life ; there grow the groves
Whose trees of golden boles and pearly fruits
Wind-moved forth utter all harmonious praise.
Cities and fanes of diamond crown the hills,
Bright with the sole companionship of Heaven,
Of this preëarthly paradise ; wherein
Who enter are by kindest angels clad
In garments wrought of rainbows, and in robes
Woven of sunset clouds, while viny wreaths
Gemberries bearing form their coronals,
Exuberant of all fruitage. Food they need not
Who live on life and quaff eternal joy,
And rest in peace as in the down of doves.
There many pass all time, the hour of God,
In pure and whole contentment. Others still
In ceaseless, boundless progress, as from star

To star, from bliss to bliss pass, until all
Return to God renewed, like rays of light,
The all-attractive and delightful light,
Redeemed up to the sun. In one band there
Jew, christian, moslem, heathen, gracious live,
In mutual forgiveness blessing each
The other ; what too in their several creeds
Is proven false each casts away ; what true
All keep uniting and amending ; for
In all was truth though thrice the truth in one.
As to the sleepless eye form forth at last,
The long immeasurable layers of light,
And beams of fire enormous in the east ;
The broad foundations of the Heaven-domed day
All fineless as the future ; so uprose
On mine the great celestial certainty.
The mask of matter fell off. I beheld,
Void of all seeming, the sole substance mind,
The actual ideal of the world.
An absolutest essence filled my soul,
And superseding all its modes and powers, ◊
Gave to the spirit consciousness divine ;
A sense of vast existence in the skies,
Boundless commune with spiritual light,
And ultimate eternity of Heaven.
And I returned mine hungry eyes to the light
Of the great spirit's eyes, which, past the first
Intensifying blindness, clearer saw
The words she uttered of triumphant truth ;
For truly as my vision heightened, lo !—
The universal volume of the Heavens,
Star-lettered in celestial characters,
Moved musically into words like these,
Which her breath framed ; and varied momentarily ;
And I perceived that thus she spake of God.
God is the sole and self-existent one,
Superessential being, of whom was
He who is with the father co-eterne,
The first and last of Being ; and of both
The spirit, and these all are one and same
In Godhood, yet distinct in Deity.
From the Son's hand came all things visible,

And from the Spirit all invisible,
Forth flowing from and ebbing back to Him,
Creation's God, regeneration's Lord.
Man's Saviour must be God ; and such was Christ.
The father of the faithful and the first
Of men was each in Him retyped ; and thus
The chosen and the world are blessed both.
And all effect, commensurate with its cause,
Each infinite, Creation stands redeemed
By Him, first, last, and mediate, God with man.
Full in the bosom of humanity,
As on the waters of the unborn world,
The spirit God came down, uniting thus
The mortal and eternal in the word
Foreuttered ere all ages, blessing all.
This is the legend which surrounds the world,
Though the best part be nigh obliterate.
Election is the law divine of Heaven,
Salvation universal law of earth.
There are who hold perfection as a gift ;
Who by strong will take hold of heavenly good ;
And they who have not, seek not, nor deserve.
Though all as sons of men be sons of God,
Yet man's eternal sonship not assures
To all like portion nor position, here
Or elsewhere ; heirs of common promises,
Not like perfection, nor same privilege.
For wisdom unto those pertains alone
Whom the Great Chooser favours with His mind,
And whom as patriarch, royal bard, or king,
Not sinless, nay, but as their life-sun set,
And longer grew their shadows, sinning worse,
More deeply, foully till death rounded all
In undistinguished darkness, His free grace
Had covered with forgiveness from their birth.
Change arts of earth ; the science of the skies
Immutable, the first man learned of God,
Is elder than the sun ; the destinies
Of all create are tabled in the Heavens.
That spiritual knowledge which to man,
Whose soul-star inly burns with living light ;
Who holds the constellations in his hand,

Sign-manual of his God, and brief of fate ;
Speaks highest truths and certainties most blessed,
Is but to few accorded ; these are born,
Let heavenly spirits imbreast the holy word,
Elect of nature, peers of Paradise.
With carnal minds the spirit race of light,
Consummate in truth's secret discipline,
Use saintly silence only ; knowing all,
They are of all incognizable themselves.
Souls these of luminous birth, who, clad in clay,
By God's grace and their own will, time by time,
Into the core of all truths penetrate ;
And compass all the wisdom men's best minds
In their devoutest hours have grasped ; all truth
Hath central commune with the Infinite good ;
And all faith truth ; thus kingly, till with God
United, and the Heavenly fulness given.
Others, soul-charged, are proved through trial, toil ;
Through peril purified ; from heart-sin purged ;
Worship of false gods, scorn of the one true ;
From gross and giant passions ; that thus to these,
Soul-wanderers through life's wilderness, might be
The record of perfective life revealed,
And its divine career by each achieved.
Men are of one kind therefore and two sorts
Irrelative as in mortality,
United only in the spirit state.
With each is imperfection, but to these
Comes by God's grace one elemental shock
To fuse the ruinous chaos wrought by sin,
And nature make communicant of Heaven.
Both gain the end so sought, and must ; but those
Labour along with wheels while these have wings.
To these God gives His spirit ; while for all
The Son laid down the Heavens as a crown,
And clothed Himself in clay ; thus taking up
Of all the nature, that all might in Him
Be one ; and full and holy equalness
Belong humanity as angelhood,
Of glory varied, level-all in bliss.
The nations, all which die to be redeemed,
Shall find desire unite with destiny.

And for the chosen, it is enough to know
God knoweth all whom He doth choose and save;
And they know that He knows. Though all the powers
Of air array themselves in lines of fire,
And arm them with the armoury of death;
Though all the hosts of hell encamp them round,
High as the tented mountains of the earth,
Yet, at a wave of His hand, like to slaves,
They vanish from the assiegement of the saints.
Transition is to all which live, life's law;
To some of downward and deterior lot;
The soul subdued to superstition sinks;
To some the link of supramundane bliss,
Whose souls are dominations incarnate;
Yea sons of stars which darting out of Heaven,
Made themselves mortal for the mother's sake;
Who with original motion fling off truths
Of perfect light, oracular of God,
Which in their minds who worthily receive
Are full of inborn virtue more than known,
Accompletive of destiny divine;
And like the luminous rudiments of Heaven,
Which gradually gravitate to worlds,
Corroborate their nature, and make free
Their souls to course through the blank void of time,
To the bright fulness of eternity.
O'er all extends God's love; for greater need
Is that the base or ignorant soul should rise
And be made noble, wise, blessed, than slave on
In hell through burning ages, to adjust
The balance sin on earth had wronged; for sin,
Irreconcilable to Deity,
Yet unavoidable to human soul,
And wherefore He hath absolutely made
His own hands answerable, shall become
The contrary of all things, and not be.
These are the great initials of the world:
Being is one, the central, infinite cause,
Common to both creator and create,
The great substratum of the universe:
Knowing and doing, and the fact of form,
The coexistent laws of one extreme;

The other all imbounding and alone.
From one divine all permeant unity
Proceeds the multitudinous infinite,
Mental, material, and essential—God,
In justice to himself, and love to all,
Basing in elemental equalness
The whole on grace; thus earth and moon were made
Like syllables of light, uttered of God;
The earth conceived in music, and the moon,
Lady of all the orbéd deities,
Like her who wears in Heaven the twelve-starred crown,
And with all creatures blessed of God; who with
A sevenfold blessing and inviolate rest,
Yea, with His sabbath, sealed the perfect world,
Making it over to eternity,
And angel musings; the bright universe,
The double tabled book of Heaven and earth.
Despite all due deficiency and sin
Which in all souls inhere till God assumes,
Progressing aye, possessing too all bliss
Elect and universal in the Heavens.
From God, the sun-creator, nature was,
Ætherial essences, all elements,
And souls therein indigenous, and man
Symbolic of all being. Out of earth
The matron moon was moulded, and the sea
Filled up the shining chasm. Both fulfil
One orbit, and one nature, and all orbs
With them, one fate, one universal end.
From the projective moment of all light
The moon was in the sun, and in the sun
The form of earth was, and the sun in Heaven,
The incarnation of the fiery skies.
And when in earth the sun and moon make one,
Nature is glorified, and enters Heaven;
The spirit bursts its immaterial shell
And form impalpable, regaining thus
The vast vacuity which fills all life,
And wherein dwells the incommunicable.
Again the Spirit, as a gale of light,
Whose words like cloudless thunder, wrought in me
Meet apperception of the sum of things.

The natural creation ended first,
Commenced the spiritual, which in God
Aforehand lived ; thus time unfolds the seed
Sown in eternity and reaped therein ;
The great paternal and invisible fire
Which cateth that it issueth, and wherein
All filiated nature ceaseth work ;
Being an infinite means as well as end.
Thy name, O Immortality ! to man
Sounds clear essential music ; through the soul
Thrilling, as through the heartstrings of a star
Its tidal pulses and dim throbs of light,
Ere fraternized in Heaven ; yea round that hope,
So vast yet vague, which, like the northern morn,
One-hour usurps the midsky, and the next
Lies buried 'neath the pole, are gathered thoughts
And truths, which with their weight determine life ;
As motion in an atom leads at last
To a world's orbit—mote and motion given.
For the exalted spirit prepared with power
Sublimes and fuses in itself all else ;
And thus self-conscious of its inner life,
Makes all externals subject, and maintains
That rule o'er thoughts and things which in itself
Is present proof of what the world most seeks,
The boundless union of the soul with God.
Now matter makes not one continuous orb,
Nor is light all-where massed alike. The stars,
Perradiated each like thunder bolts,
Stand, clustered into omniformal spheres.
The wise well know true union is in Heaven,
And pure totality, and there alone.
Behold ! the spirit said, and I beheld
A bright miraculous mystery of God :
The divine marriage of the sun and moon.
The sun was flaming high in Heaven ; the moon,
Mighty though mild, and all the saintly stars
Softer than sunlight, stronger than the moon,
Shining at once in grandeur and grave bliss.
It was the world's All-sire gave the bride. The stars
Were her immortal bridemaids, and strewed,
Along the glittering path she trode through Heaven.

Life-blooms and wreathed sun-rays of all hues.
Deep in all dayless time, degreeless space
The shining fane stood : and the angels struck
Their lyres of light, and even to the feet
Of the Divine Ones bowed them, with serene
Acclaim afar off hailing them ; and cried
Welcome thou Lord of life, thou Bride of light !
All joy, all bliss be yours in Heaven and earth,
And all the universal blessers choose.
Choicest of all the chosen, art thou here ?
Thy love is more delicious than the rose,
Yea purer than the lily or the light.
Lord of the day ! the world awaits thee now ;
Earth's eyes are dim with watching for this day ;
The bread is broken and the wine is poured,
And all the guests are gathered from the bounds
Of Heaven's imperial horizon, to this
The bright palatial centre. All things serve
The hallowing rite which nature owns with God.
And so they became one. In golden he,
In silver car came she down the blue skies ;
But on return they clomb the clouds in one,
And vanished in their snow. The marriage feast
Was held an universal holiday
Throughout the light-lit world : nor since have ceased
The great congratulations. Peace and bliss
Pervade the perfect state and all is love.
Still as a star which overflows with light,
She stood and spake intuitive of Heaven,
The world-divining spirit whilom named.
Now such as man is to himself is His
Divine idea ; but the God which is,
Is not the God men worship, not alone
Ineffable, but inconceivable ;
How shall an atom comprehend the Heaven ?
Two points men occupy in space and time
And half exist of matter and in form :
Thus His existence is their opposite ;
And all is either God or nothingness,
Being with nonbeing identical.
All terms are relative expressing bound ;
But Deity, interminable being,

Hath ever therefore been unnamed ; but men,
 Framed to exist in act and utterance,
 And grasping ever at the love of God,
 Strained to the breast of silence, breathe His name
 In pious perpetuity ; and throw
 Off with orbicular action sphere on sphere,
 Like circlets of reiterated light,
 Of thought on objects vastest and divine,
 In hope to know the great unknowable,
 The all prothetic universal I :
 Within whose ample essence all man's thought
 Respecting it, the infinite abstract
 And limitless negation ; whether good
 Being, or life, or wisdom, the abyss,
 Silence or truth, love, mind, will, intellect,
 Causer of causes ; all theosophic lore
 Of man-born, or angelic mind, is lost,
 Like a stray wind which from some æry height
 Soars, suicidal, up the dark inane.
 She ceased, the all-created, gazing down deep
 Into her own serene and shining breast ;
 O'er which inviolate and sublime abyss
 Her all-embracing arms she crossed in peace.
 She ceased, and all was silence. Earth and Heaven
 Like solar seas, unfathomably bright,
 Rolled forth their inmost radiance in twin tides,
 Interminable. Since the first begotten day
 Until the last born eve when all shall end,
 And life's great vein within the embosoming Heavens
 Be utterly dried up ; till night shall come,
 As some cloud-monster eats up star on star,
 The children of the light ; till never more
 Shall cloud refresh earth's lip, nor breeze her breast,
 Hath been beheld such glory, nor shall be,
 Of Nature serving God ; she sibyl-like
 Instinct with inspiration, and He her
 Endowing with all bliss unendingly.

Helen. But why art thou of all men favoured thus ?
 To say there is a mystery in this,
 Or aught, is only to confess God. Speak !

Festus. It is God's will that I possess this power,
 Thus to attract great spirits to mine own,

As steel magnetically charged draws steel ;
Himself the magnet of the universe,
Round whom all spirits tremble, and towards whom
All tend.

Helen. If as thou sayest it is good,
May it be an immortal good to thee.

Festus. There is no keeping back the power we have.
He hath no power who hath not power to use.
Some of these beings whom I speak of are
Pure spirits, others, bodies soulical :
For spirit is to soul as wind to air.
They give me all I seek, and at a wish
Would furnish treasures, thrones, or palaces ;
But all these things have I eschewed, and chosen
Command of mind alone, and of the world
Unbodied and all-lovely.

Helen. Is not this
Pleasure too much for mortal to be good ?

Festus. All pleasure is with Thee, God ! elsewhere,
none.

Not silver-ceiled hall, nor golden throne,
Set thick with priceless gems, as Heaven with stars,
Or the high heart of youth with its bright hopes :
Nor marble gleaming like the white moonlight,
As 'twere an apparition of a palace :
Inlaid with light as is a waterfall ;
Not rainbow pinions coloured like yon cloud,
The sun's broad banner o'er his evening tent,
Can match the bright imaginings of a child
Upon the glories of his coming years ;
How equal, then, the full assured faith
Of him to whom the Saviour hath vouchsafed
The Heaven of His bosom ? What can tempt
In its performance equal to that promise ?
My soul stands fast to Heaven as doth a star ;
And only God can move it, who moves all.
There are who might have soared to what I spurned ;
And like to Heavenly orders human souls ;
Some fitted most for contemplation, some
For action ; those for thrones, and these for wheels.

Helen. Tell me what they discourse upon, these angels ?

Festus. They speak of what is passed or coming, less

Of present things or actions. Some say most
About the future, others of the gone ;
The dim traditions of eternity,
Or Time's first golden moments. One there was
From whose sweet lips elapsed as from a well,
Continuously, truths which made my soul,
As they sank in it, fertile with rich thoughts—
Spake to me oft of Heaven, and our talk
Was of divine things always—angels, Heaven,
Salvation, immortality, and God ;
The different states of spirits, and the kinds
Of being in all orbs, or physical,
Or intellectual. I never tired
Preferring questions, but at each response
My soul drew back, sealike, into its depths,
To urge another charge on him. This spirit
Came to me daily for a long, long time,
Whene'er I prayed His presence. Many a world
He knew right well which man's eye never yet
Hath marked, nor ever may mark while on earth ;
Yet grew his knowledge every time he came.
His thoughts all great, and solemn, and serene,
Like the immensest features of an orb,
Whose eyes are blue seas, and whose clear broad brow
Some cultured continent, came ever round
From truth to truth, day bringing as they came.
He was to me an all-explaining spirit,
Teaching divine things by analogy
With mortal and material. Thus of God,
He shewed, as the three primal rays make one
Sole beam of Light, so the three Persons make
One God ; neither without the other is.
However bright or beautiful itself
The theme he touched, he made it more so by
His own light, like a fire-fly on a flower.
And one of all I knew the most of, yet
The least can I say of him ; for full oft
Our thoughts drown speech, like to a foaming force,
Which thunders down the echo it creates.
Yet must I somewhat tell of him. He was
The spirit evil of the universe,
Impersonate. Oh, strange and wild to know !

Perdition and destruction dwelled in him,
Like to a pair of eagles in one nest.
Hollow and wasteful as a whirlwind was
His soul ; his heart as earthquake, and engulfed
World upon world. In him they disappeared
As might a morsel in a lion's maw.
The world which met him rolled aside to let him
Pass on his piercing path. His eyeballs burned
Revolving lightnings like a world on fire ;
Their very night was fatal as the shade
Of Death's dark valley. And his space-spread wings—
Wide as the wings of darkness when she rose
Scowling, and backing upwards, as the sun,
Giant of light, first donned his burning crown,
Gladdening all Heaven with his inaugural smile,
Were stained with the blood of many a starry world :
Yea, I have seen him seize upon an orb,
And cast it careless into worldless space,
As I might cast a pebble in the sea.
His might upon this earth was wondrous most.
He stood a match for mountains. Ocean's depths
He clove unto their rock-bed, as a sword
Through blood and muscle to the central bone,
With one swoop of his arm. His brow was pale—
Pale as the life-blood of the undying worm
Which writhes around its frame of vital fire.
Eclipselike fell his thought upon the mind,
Space-piercing shadow, alighting on the face
Of some fair planet circling deep in Heaven ;
Causing it shudder as an angel when
He hears the thunder-curse of demon foe.
His voice blew like the desolating gust
Which strips the trees, and strews the earth with death.
His words were ever like a wheel of fire,
Rolling and burning this way now, now that :
Now whirling forth a blinding beam, now soft
And deep as Heaven's own luminous blue—and now
Like to a conqueror's chariot wheel they came,
Sodden with blood and slow revolving death :
And every tone fell on the ear and heart,
Heavy, and harsh, and startling, like the first
Handful of mould cast on the coffined dead,
As though he elaimed them his.

Lucifer (entering).
The portrait, lady ?

Dost recognize

Helen.

Festus ! who is this ?

What portrait ?—

Festus.

Wherefore comest thou ? Did I not

Claim privacy one evening ?

Lucifer.

Why, indeed—

I simply called, as I was on my way
To Jupiter—and he's a mouthful, mind ;—
To keep the proverbs, too, in countenance.

Festus. Dost not remember, loveliest, some few moons
Agone, and he who—

Helen.

Surely ; I recall

His presence now. Where all were, he was, too,
Welcome. Bright hours now faded.

Lucifer.

Queen of joy !

Thy soul-thought, like the fragrance of a flower,
Speaks the bright essence whence it emanates.
Unwelcome I should not be, I felt sure.
Pardon my abrupt entrance ; and believe
If for the rapture of those hours 'twere e'er
Mine to do thanks, in place of uttering, I
Could but that use of knowledge which high minds
Like thine affect, and if abstruse the more
Affect, perfect and hid from the world, as now
Proffer.

Helen. And I, if aught that I could do,
Say, think, were worth reward, nought else would
choose.

Festus. Insatiable of knowledge seems man's mind ;
Like to the bright fish in Heaven's nether sphere,
For ever fed with midnight's luminous food ;
For ever sateless of the starry stream.

Helen. To know more is to live more.

Lucifer.

Both are ripe

For truth's reception. Wherefore not be sealed
With wisdom's sacred seal ? One is, I know,
Who underneath the sun, nought better loves
Than Heaven-aspiring souls to initiate here
Into those solemn mysteries, which, once proved,
Stretch through Death's sea of shadows, and the world
Of mortal and immortal life make one :—
Illuminative rites, all times maligned

By shallow wits, but which o'ertopped the flood,
 Known but to the white-souled seed of light, who born
 Of oak and rock, by virtue of belief
 In Heaven's essential universal creed,
 May perfect insight claim of solar truth ;
 And evermore receive.

Helen. Thou givest me
 Somewhat to look for, live for, die for now.
 I feel the Sibylline nature in my soul
 Uncoil its secret strength. I long to act.

Lucifer. Who loves or would achieve perfection here,
 Lives, like the sun, in restful action, best ;
 Imparting light, disclosing not its source.
 The sage I mean, full well I know, have known
 Long ; and ye him shall know. Our student friend
 Bring with ye ; for his earnest soul athirst
 For the pure draught from wisdom's pearl-lipped bowl,
 And keen with wholesome hunger for the truth,
 Shall chant its thankful compline with your own.
 Prepare him secretly for our emprise.
 Trust everything to me ; and at the hour,
 And spot, hereafter to be named, we meet ;
 All eager to enjoy the feast of light.

Festus. Faith sometimes more expects than truth can
 grant,
 And brings a jar for what scarce fills a phial.
 But faith, not knowledge, weds with bliss. To me
 Not much avails, all-knowing or unknown.
 I have seen a beggar scouted in the street,
 Whose starry-headed sceptre warded, watched,
 By angels under oath, now waits in Heaven
 His regal hand ; hand here outstretched for alms.
 The more I know, the quicklier comes the sum
 Of all things. Therefore, urge me not ; nor thou
 Charm of my being, haste me to forego,
 For even divine accomplishments, this life
 In love which lapses, as a summer stream
 In sunlight, just reflective of the Heavens.
 Rather, forgive me, both ; if, dreading change,
 I feel an ominous instinct to avoid,
 Though now might be fulfilled my once best aims,
 The mystic science proffered.

Helen. Nay, I pray,
Beseech, command thee, on thy allegiance;
Force me not to compel thee.

Festus. I will not;.
Content with present aims.

Helen. Alas! That I
Should live at once to beg of thee, and spurn
That unaccustomed dullness which slow creeps,
And mosses o'er the marble of thy mind.
We yet will gain our point.

Lucifer. I trust so. Me
It much concerns; for I have ends in view
I cannot yet accomplish, this undone.

Festus. This way and that way swayed, but still inert,
Like to a sunk skiff rotting in the ooze,
My heart lies; and the sport of every wave
Of feeling, once contemptuously it keeled,
Nor floats, nor falls. I must have time to think.

Lucifer. Then Time, be thou my friend, as heretofore.
But what shall I do all this wretched while
Thou art engrosséd thus?

Festus. Do as I, make love.

Lucifer. But that were to fall upwards. Well, I'll think.
For now, as I remember, and mayhap,
To learn of equal beauty may please some—
Last night, not far from hence, a form I marked
Of queenly beauty seated by the sea,
As eyeing Heaven, the birthland of her soul;
What time the westering sun, magician-like
His golden wand had levelled on the main,
And soothed it into silence; face and form
Once seen before by me in saddest wise,
Beside the bier of one, fame holds like fair.

Festus. Name it not now. The harvest of my heart
Is always woe—whate'er the joy of bloom;
Nor raise the ghost of grief to haunt for aye
Life's desolate tenement.

Helen. Oh, I know her well.
She is the occultation of my soul
Prospective, for I dread lest we should meet.
It is Elissa. Friendship's favourites once
Were we, till lordlier likings since made us

Distant and cold as earth's opposing poles.
 Seek her : sue, if thou carest. I wish her much
 Too well to wish her here. She makes my dreams
 Ghastly.

Lucifer. Nay, dread her not.

Helen. Away ; away.

Lucifer. As rival elements that strive to impress
 Their power on mountains, lower and lessen them,
 Nor can aught else ; so, peradventure, these.
 The wise foresee things, which, let fools foretel ;
 With me, it is enough to know ; and now ;—
 Any commands for our planetary friends ?
 I go. Make my excuses.

[Goes.

Festus. A mistake,

Dearest ; but rectified.

Helen. Will he return ?

Festus. No.

Helen. Thou art troubled.

Festus. Truly. I, far off,

Feel the perturbing influence of his star.

I knew him coming while I spake to thee.

Helen. Let us rejoice together, and both hope
 Such strange effects may cease, or I shall dread
 Him to accompany elsewhere, or to meet,
 As predisposed but now.

Festus. And he is gone !

Hell hath its own again. Some sorrow chills

Ever the spirit, like a cloudlet nursed

In the star-giant's bosom.

Helen. Tell me, love,

More of these angels.

Festus There was one I loved

Of those immortals, of a lofty air,

Dimly divine and sad ; and side by side

Him whom I spake of first she oft would stand,

With her fair form—shadow illuminate—

Like to the dark moon in the young one's arms.

She never murmured at the doom which made

The sorrow that contained her, as the air

Infolds the orb whereon we dwell, but spake

Of God's will alway as most good and wise.

She had but little pleasure ; but her all,

Such as it was, was in devising plans

Of bliss to come; or in the tales of Time,
 And the sweet early earth. She was, in truth,
 Our earth's own angel. Ofttimes would she dwell
 With long and luminous sweetness on her theme,
 Unwearying, unpausing, as a world.
 The sun would rise and set; the soul-like moon,
 In passive beauty and receptive light,
 Absorbing inspiration from the sun,
 As doth from God His prophet ceaselessly,—
 She too would rise and set; and the far stars,
 The third estate of Light, complete the round
 Of the divine day;—still our angel spake;
 And still I listened to the eloquent tongue
 Which even on earth retained the tone of Heaven.
 The shadow of a cloud upon a lake,
 O'er which the wind hath all day held his breath,
 Is not more calm and fair than her dear face—
 So sweetly sad and so consolingly,
 When she spake even on the end of earth.
 Save that her eye grew darker, and her brow
 Brighter with thought, as with galactic light
 Mid Heaven when clearest, at such times, not I
 Had known that earth were dearer unto her
 Than other of the visitants divine,
 Which hallow oft mine hours;—save, too, that then
 As though to touch but on that topic had,
 Torpedo-like, numbed thought, she would straight cease
 All converse suddenly, and kneel and seem
 Inwardly praying with much power;—rise,
 And vanish into Heaven. My mind is full
 Of stories she hath told me of our world.
 No word an angel utters lose I ever.
 One I will tell thee now.

Helen. Do, let me hear.
 Thy talk is the sweet extract of all speech;
 And holds mine ear in blissful slavery.

Festus. It was on a lovely summer afternoon,
 Close by the grassy marge of a deep tarn,
 Nigh halfway up a mountain, that we stood,
 I and the angel, when she told me this.
 Above us rose the grey rocks; by our side
 Forests of pines; and the bright breaking wavelets
 Came crowding, dancing to the brink, like thoughts

Unto our lips. Before us shone the sun.
The angel waved her hand ere she began,
As bidding earth be still. The birds ceased singing,
And the trees breathing, and the lake smoothed down
Each shining wrinkle, and the wind drew off.
Time leant him o'er his scythe and, listening, wept.
The circling world reined in her lightning pace
A moment; Ocean hushed his snow-maned steeds,
And a cloud hid the sun, as does the face
A meditative hand: then spake she thus:—
Scarce had the sweet song of the morning stars
Which rang through space at the first sign of life
Our earth gave, springing from the lap of God
On to her orbit, ended, when from Heaven
Came down a white-winged host; and in the east,
Where Eden's Pleasance was, first furled their wings,
Alighting like to snowflakes. There they built,
Out of the riches of the soil around,
A house to God. There were the ruby rocks,
And there, in blocks, the quarried diamonds lay;
Opal and emerald mountain, amethyst,
Sapphire and chrysoprase, and jacinth stood
With the still action of a star, all light,
Like seabased icebergs, blinding. These, with tools
Tempered in Heaven, the band angelic wrought,
And raised, and fitted, having first laid down
The deep foundations of the holy dome
On bright and beaten gold; and all the while
A song of glory hovered round the work
Like rainbow round a fountain. Day and night
Went on the hallowed labour till 'twas done.
And yet but thrice the sun set, and but thrice
The moon arose: so quick is work divine.
Tower and roof, and pinnacle without,
Were solid diamond. Within, the dome
Was eyeblue sapphire, sown with gold-bright stars
And clustering constellations; the wide floor
All emerald, earthlike, veined with gold and silver,
Marble and mineral of every hue
And marvellous quality; the meanest thing,
Where all things were magnificent, was gold,
The plainest. The high altar there was shaped
Out of one ruby heartlike. Columned round

With alabaster pure was all. And now
So high and bright it shone in the midday light,
It could be seen from Heaven. Upon their thrones
The sun-eyed angels hailed it, and there rose
A hurricane of blissfulness in Heaven,
Which echoed for a thousand years. One dark,
One solitary and foreseeing thought,
Passed, like a planet's transit o'er the sun,
Across the brow of God; but soon He smiled
Towards earth, and that smile did consecrate
The temple to Himself. And they who built
Bowed themselves down and worshipped in its walls.
High on the front were writ these words—To God.
The heavenly built this for the earthly ones,
That in His worship both might mix on earth,
As afterward they hope to do in Heaven.
Had man stood good in Eden this had been:
He fell, and Eden vanished. The bright place
Reared by the angels, of all precious things,
For the joint worship of the sons of earth
And Heaven, fell with him, on the very day
He should have met God and His angels there—
The very day he disobeyed and joined
The host of Death blackbannered. Eden fell;
The groves and grounds, which God the Lord's own feet
Had hallowed; the all-hued and odorous bowers
Where angels wandered, wishing them in Heaven
The trees of life and knowledge—trees of death
And madness, as they proved to man—all fell;
And that bright fane fell first. No death-doomed eye
Gazed on its glory. Earthquakes gulped it down.
The Temple of the Angels, vast enough
To hold all nations worshipping at once,
Lay in its grave; the cherubs' flaming swords
The sole sad torches of its funeral.
Till at the flood, when the world's giant heart
Burst like a shell, it scattered east and west,
And far and wide, among less noble ruins,
The fragments of that angel-built fane,
Which was in Eden, and of which all gems
That now are precious, were; and still shall be,
Gathered again into a happier end,
In the pure City of the Son of God,

High, holy, happy, stainless as a star,
 Imperishable as eternity.
 The angel ended ; and the winds, waves, clouds,
 The sun, the woods, and merry birds went on
 As theretofore, in brightness, strength, and music.
 One scarce could think that earth at all had fallen,
 To look upon her beauty. If the brand
 Of sin were on her brow, it was surely hid.
 In natural art from every eye but God's.
 All things seemed innocence and happiness.
 I was all thanks. And look ! the angel said,
 Take these, and give to one thou lovest best :
 Mine own hands saved them from the shining ruin
 Whereof I late have told thee ; and she gave
 What now are greenly glowing on thine arms.
 Ere I could answer she was up, star high !
 Winning her way through Heaven.

Helen. How shall I thank thee
 Enough, or that kind angel who hath made
 The gift to me dear doubly ? I shall be
 Afraid almost to wear them, but would not
 Part with them for the treasures of all worlds.
 How shew my thanks ?

Festus. Love me as now, dear beauty !
 Present or absent always, and 'twill be
 More than enough of recompense for me.

Helen. Hast met that angel late-while ?

Festus. I have not.
 Yet oft methinks I see her, catch a glimpse
 Of her sun-circling pinions, or bright feet
 Which fitter seem for rainbows than for earth,
 Or Heaven's triumphal arch, more firm and pure
 Than the world's whitest marble ;—see her seated oft
 On some high snowy cloud-cliff, harp in hand,
 Singing the sun to sleep as down he lays
 His head of glory on the rocking deep :
 And so sing thou to me.

Helen. There, rest thyself. [*Sings.*

Oh ! not the diamond starry bright
 Can so delight my view,
 As doth the moonstone's changing light
 And gleamy glowing hue ;

Now blue as Heaven, and then anon
 As golden as the sun,
 It hath a charm in every change—
 In brightening, darkening, one.

And so with beauty, so with love,
 And everlasting mind ;
 It takes a tint from Heaven above,
 And shines as it's inclined ;
 Or from the sun, or towards the sun,
 With blind or brilliant eye ;
 And only lights as it reflects
 The life-light of the sky.

He sleeps! The fate of many a gracious moral
 This, to be stranded on a drowsy ear.

SCENE—*Home.*

FESTUS and HELEN at her piano ; THE STUDENT.—*Dusk.*

Helen. I cannot live away from thee. How can
 A flower live without its root?

Festus. I, too,
 Must love or die.

Helen. But I must have. Attend!
 I am to say and do just as I please ;
 I may command thee, may I ? that I will.

Festus. I love to be enslaved. O ! I would rather
 Obey thee, beauty ! than rule men by millions.

Helen. Near, as afar, I will have love the same—
 With a bright sameness, like this diamond,
 Which, where ever the light be, shines like bright.
 And thou shalt say all sorts of pretty things
 To me ; mind, to me only : write love-songs
 About me, and I will sing them to myself ;
 Perhaps to thee, some time as it were now,
 If I should happen to be very kind.

Festus. Sing now !

Helen. No !

Festus. Tyrant ! I will banish thee.

Helen. Nay, if to sing and play would please thee, I
 Would die to music. It was very wrong
 To say I would deny thee anything ;
 But be not angry with me : for though God

Forgave me, I could ne'er forgive myself,
If I brought sorrow to thee. Could I, love?

Festus. As thou art empress of my bosom, No!

Helen. Nought fear I, but an unkind word from thee.
Dark death may frighten children, hell the wretch
Who feels that he deserves it; but for me,
I know I cannot do nor say aught worthy
Of the pure pain, a frown of thine can cause,
Or a cold, careless look. No! never frown.
If I do wrong, forgive me, or I die;
And thou wilt then be wretcheder than I;
The unforgiving than the unforgiven.

Festus. I do absolve thee, beauty, of all faults,
Passed, present, or to come.

Helen. Well, that will do.
What was I saying? I love this instrument;
It speaks, it thinks—nay, I could kiss it: look!
There are three things I love half killingly:—
Thee lastly, and this next, and myself first.

Festus. Thou art a silly, tiresome thing, and yet
I never weary of thee; but could gaze,
Faint with excess and not satiety,
Upon thy countenance, with the serious joy
With which we eye and eye the unbounded space
Which is the visible attribute of God,
Who makes all things within Himself; and thus
It is the Heaven we hope for; and can find
No point from which to take its altitude;
For the Infinite is upwards, and above
The highest thing created—upwards aye:
So I could, thinking on thy face, believe
An Infinite expression, heightening still
The longer that I thought; and leaving thee,
Coming to thee, or being with thee,—love!

Helen. I am so happy when with thee.

Festus.

And I.

They tell us virtue lives in self-denial.
My virtue is indulgence. I was born
To gratify myself unboundedly,
So that I wronged none else. These arms were given me
To clasp the beautiful, and cleave the wave;
These limbs to leap and wander where I will;

These eyes to look on everything without
Effort : these ears to list my loved one's voice ;
These lips to be divinised by her kiss :
And every sense, pulse, passion, power, to be
Swoln into sunny ripeness.

Helen. Virtue is one
With nature, or 'tis nothing ! it is love.

Festus. I come fresh from thee every time we meet,
Steeped in the still sweet dew of thy soft beauty,
Like earth at day-dawn, lifting up her head
Out of her sleep, star-watched, to face the sun—
So I, to front the world, on leaving thee.
Oh ! there is inspiration in thy look ;
Poesie, prophesy. Come hither, love :
The evening air is sweet.

Helen. It comes on us
Fresher and clearer through these dewy vine-leaves,
Fit for the forehead of the young wine-god.

Festus. A large, red egg of light the moon lies like
On the dark moor-hill, and now, rising slow,
Beams on the clear flood, smilingly intent,
Like a fair face, which loves to look on itself,
Saying—"There is no wonder that men love me,
For I am beautiful!"—as I heard thee.

Helen. It was not right to overhear me that.

Festus. 'Twas very wrong to do what I could not help ;
But vanity speaks out.

Helen. Well, I don't mind ;
I never knew that I was as I am
Till others told me.

Festus. Now were soon enough.

Helen. Ah, nothing comes to us too soon but sorrow.

Festus. For all were happiness, if all might live
Long, or die soon, enough : for even us.

Helen. Hast thou no more of marvels ?

Festus. What is earth
But one majestic marvel wrought of God ?

Helen. But didst thou never meet, mid far-off orbs,
None of those strange commingled shapes which here
Romance and fiction boast of, and bards sing ?
Methinks in worlds half-finished, one might see,
As earth once saw in the solemn days of old,

Mysterious sphinx, or dragon flamy-breathed ;
 And Centaur, lord of all four-footed life ;
 Who with man's heart and head, and a steed's hoofs
 Scoured earth impetuous, windlike ; Minotaur,
 For whose just death in labyrinthine lair
 Bright Ariadne won her star-gemmed crown ;
 Man-bull, or lion winged, cherubic shapes,
 Or solar, which Assyria erst adored ;
 Simorgh, and rokh, and phoenix, comet-like,
 Which nested in the sun ; and in the deep,
 Sea-horse, fish-tailed ; and, not unknown, even now,
 Or here to nature, where, by Jura's isle,
 Fond mermaid, hybrid of the earth and sea,
 Than fair-haired Yseult vainer of her locks,
 Erect amid the waves, on caudal curve
 Poises her form weed-girdled ; in her hand,
 Her shadow glassed ; she, rivals knowing none,
 Beckons the youth belated in his skiff,
 Far out of hail of land ; seductive, lands
 The quiet cave, surpassing in sweet gloom
 Earth's superficial glare ; her bridal home ;
 The charm immortal of the foamy sea ;
 Her dower of pearl and amber ; wide domain,
 And every joy ; oft, over shoulders white
 Showering the shining tresses, which, as oft,
 The lapping waves displace ; but he, with fear
 Half dead, though scarce incurious of the deeps,
 Nor to adventure mostly disinclined,
 Rows faster, lest the moon set, till he hears
 His heart's betrothed, him wailing on the beach,
 Some simple cottage-maid.

Festus.

Far happier he.

Helen. I grant ye. But hadst thou no strange world
toy,

No faithful fire-drake, dogging every step,
 No spotted wivern, giant purring pet,
 Or shoulder perching harpy ? Didst not find
 One Salamander fire-conceived, oft seen
 Luxurious nestling in the seven-yearred flame,
 Emblem of Him, who, mid the children three,
 Thrown in the furnace, trode the coals serene ;—
 Nor once a milk-white unicorn bestride,

Through greenwood ambled erst by faerie power,
Predictive of the damsel of the sea?

Festus. I don't remember these things, if I saw.

Helen. Dost not remember, when, the other eve,
Thy friend the student called, there was a tale
Upon thy tongue he interrupted?

Festus. Was there?—

Helen. A tale out of the poets, about love,
And happiness, and sorrow, and such things.

Festus. But I forget such things when thou art by.
Besides, I asked him here again, to-night,
Here at this hour; and he is punctual.

Helen. In truth, then, I despair of hearing it.
He keeps his word relentlessly. With not
More pride an Indian shews his foeman's scalp,
Than he his watch for punctuality.

Festus. But tales of love are far more readily
Made than remembered.

Helen. Tell-tale, make one, then.

Festus. Love is the art of hearts and heart of arts.
Conjunctive looks and interjectional sighs
Are its vocabulary's greater half.
Well, then, my story says, there was a pair
Of lovers, once—

Helen. Once! nay, how singular!

Festus. But where they lived indeed I quite forget;—
Say anywhere—say here: their names were—I
Forget those, too; say any one's, say ours.

Helen. Most probable, most pertinent, so far!

Festus. The lady was, of course, most beautiful,
And made her lover do just as she pleased:
And consequently he did very wrong.
They met, sang, walked, talked folly, just as all
Such couples do, adored each other; thought,
Spoke, wrote, dreamed of and for nought on earth
Except themselves; and so on.

Helen. Pray proceed!—

Festus. That's all.

Helen. Oh, no!

Festus. Well, thus the tale ends; stay!
No, I cannot remember nor invent.

Helen. Do think!

Festus.

I can't.

Helen.

Oh then, I don't like

that :

'Tis not in earnest.

Festus.

Well, in earnest, then.

She did but look upon him, and his blood
Blushed deeper even from his inmost heart ;
For at each glance of those sweet eyes a soul
Looked forth as from the azure gates of Heaven ;
She laid her finger on him ; and he felt
As might a formless mass of marble feel,
While feature after feature of a god
Were being wrought from out of it. She spake ;
And his love-wildered and idolatrous soul
Clung to the æry music of her words,
Like a bird on a bough, high swaying in the wind.
He looked upon her beauty and forgot,
As in a sense of drowning, all things else ;
And right and wrong seemed one, seemed nothing ; she
Was beauty, and that beauty everything.
He looked upon her as the sun on earth :
Until, like him, he gazed himself away
From Heaven so doing ; till he even wept,—
Wept on her bosom as a storm-charged cloud
Weeps itself out upon a hill, and cried—
I, too, could look on thee until I wept,—
Blind me with kisses ! Let me look no longer ;
Or change the action of thy loveliness,
Lest long same-seemingness should send me mad !
Blind me with kisses ; I would ruin sight
To give its virtue to thy lips, whereon
I would die now, or ever live ; and she,
Soft as a feather-footed cloud on Heaven,
While her sad face grew bright like night with stars,
Would turn her brow to his and both be happy ;
Numbered among the constellations they !
Then as tired wanderer, snow-blinded, sinks
And swoons upon the swelling drift, and dies ;
So on her dazzling bosom would he lay
His famished lips, and end their travels there.
Oh, happy they ! not he would go to Heaven ;
Not, though he might that moment.

Helen.

Nor I now.

Festus. Helen, my love?*Helen.*

Yes, I am here.

Festus.

It has

Been such a day as that, thou knowest, when first
 I said I loved thee; that long, sunny day
 We passed upon the waters—heedless nought,
 Seeing nought but each other.

Helen.

I remember.

The only wise thing that I ever did—
 The only good, was to love thee, and therefore
 I would have no one else as wise as I.
 Didst thou not say that student would be here?

Festus. I think I hear him every minute come.

Helen. I deemed him in our revellous days gone by,
 Intolerably sad.

Festus.

Not wholly so.

Helen. Once, when thou wert afar, he came, and then,
 Right sadly entertained me; the whole while
 Themes so recondite, studies so abstruse
 Perpending that he left me much perplexed;
 Much he explained to me of Cabbala;
 And correspondences and symbol types;
 Angelic tongues and astral alphabets;
 All which, quoth he, learned aptly, make for us
 An upward reaching lesson towards the skies.
 And as all souls are but the breath divine,
 Dewlike, conglobed into separate entities
 By inimical matter, limited here
 Of pure necessity, so, he affirmed
 That manhood is but angelhood disguised
 In some frustrate condition, earthwards urged,
 And angelhood but reascendant—

Festus.

Man?

Helen. Nay, truly I forget me. In his scheme,
 But one thing was, and that was infinite;
 But whether man or Deity not now
 Can I recall; indifferent which, it seemed.
 Constrained, in fine, to check him, I averred
 Such converse to be awful. Truly doth
 All commune, he replied, when to its depths
 The soul itself unbosoms, and high thought

Calls to Truth's far profound, as to the sea
The clouds storm-fraught, that groan with thunder-fire,
And passionate flashings blent with blinding rain.

Festus. He ceased then?

Helen. Ceased.

Festus. And this was what he taught?

Helen. Nay, this was what I learned. Teach could he
not;

For he lacks faith nor can indoctrinate.
All things he seems to know and nought believes;
Save as a possibility. To me,
His mind shews inconclusive, as an arch
Without its facial keystone.

Festus. Sad! yet I
Feel my heart ripen towards him as a friend,
More than to other unit of my kind.
All minds must thread the burning shares of doubt;
Who wholly scatheless 'scape are blessed; are few.
Thine be it, him to imbue with faith like thine;
And so remunerate with commutual debt.
He for the future will be one of us.

Helen. It is not kind. We should be more alone.
There was a time thou wouldst have no one else.

Festus. Am I not with thee all day?

Helen. Yes, I know;
But often and often thou art thinking not
Of me.

Festus. My good child!—

Helen. Well, I know thou lovest me;
And so I cannot bear thee to think, speak,
Or be with any but me.

Festus. Then I will not.

Helen. Oh, thou wouldst promise me the clock round.

Now,
Promise me this—that I shall never die,
And I'll believe thee when I am dead—not till.
But let it pass. I am at peace with thee;
And pardon thee, and give thee leave to live.

Festus. Magnanimous!

Helen. When earth, and Heaven, and all
Things seem so bright and lovely for our sakes,
It were a sin not to be happy. See,
The moon is up, it is the dawn of night.

Stands by her side one bold, bright, steady star—
 Star of her heart, and heir to all her light,
 Whereon she looks so proudly mild and calm,
 As though she were the mother of that star,
 And knew he was a chief sun in his sphere ;
 But by her side, in the great strife of lights
 To shine to God he had filially failed,
 And hid his arrows and his bow of beams.
 Mother of stars! the Heavens look up to thee.
 They shine the brighter but to hide thy waning ;
 They wait and wane for thee to enlarge thy beauty ;
 They give thee all their glory night by night ;
 Their number makes not less thy loneliness
 Nor loveliness.

Festus. Heaven's beauty grows on us ;
 And when the elder worlds have ta'en their seats,
 Come the divine ones, gathering one by one,
 And family by family, with still
 And holy air, into the house of God—
 The house of light He hath builded for Himself,
 And worship Him in silence and in sadness,
 Immortal and immovable. And there
 Night after night, they meet to worship God.
 For us this witness of the worlds is given,
 That we may add ourselves to their great glory,
 And worship with them. They are there for lights
 To light us on our way through Heaven to God.
 And we, too, have the power of light in us.
 Ye stars, how bright ye shine to-night ; mayhap
 Ye are the resurrection of the worlds,—
 Glorified globes of light! Shall ours be like ye ?
 Nay, but it is ! this wild, dark earth of ours,
 Whose face is furrowed like a losing gamester's,
 Is shining round, and bright, and smooth in air
 Millions of miles off. Not a single path
 Of thought I tread, but that it leads to God.
 And when her time is out, and earth again
 Hath travailed with the divine dust of man,
 Then the world's womb shall open, and her sons
 Be born again, all glorified immortals.
 And she, their mother, purified by fire,
 Shall sit her down in Heaven, a bride of God,
 And handmaid of the Everbeing One.

Our earth is learning all accomplishments
To fit her for her bridehood.

Helen.

He is here.

Festus. Welcome.

Student. I thought the night was beautiful,
But find the in-door scene still lovelier.

Helen. Ah! all is beautiful where beauty is.

Student. Night hath made many bards; she is so lovely.
For it is beauty maketh poesie,
As from the dancing eye come tears of light.
Night hath made many bards; she is so lovely.
And they have praised her to her starry face
So long, that she hath blushed and left them, often.
When first and last we met, we talked on studies;
Mingling with men, as bidden by thy good rede,
Abandoning abstruse studies, as of stars,
In their antique relations, thought, with earth;
Seed-gold, or medicinal all-heal; now
As profitless, unless to raise the mind
To ends more high and pure; ends better gained
By severe knowledge of Time's actual truths,
Than meditation on mere possibles;
All other intellectual aims resigned,
Save metaphysic lore which fines the mind,
And teaches Being's vast necessities,
Poetry only I confess is mine;
The only thing I think of now, or read:
Feeding my soul upon the soft, and sweet,
And delicate imaginings of song;
For as nightingales do upon glow-worms feed,
So poets live upon the living light
Of nature and of beauty; they love light.

Festus. But poetry is not confined to books.
For the creative spirit which thou seekest
Is in thee, and about thee; yea, it hath
God's everywhere-ness.

Student. Truly. It was for this
I sought to know thy thoughts, and hear the course
Thou wouldst lay out for one who longs to win
A name among the nations.

Festus. First of all,
Care not about the name, but bind thyself,

Body and soul, to nature hiddenly.
 Lo, the great march of stars from earth to earth,
 Through Heaven. The earth speaks inwardly alone.
 Let no man know thy business, save some friend—
 A man of mind, above the run of men ;
 For it is with all men and with all things.
 The bard must have a kind, courageous heart,
 And natural chivalry to aid the weak.
 He must believe the best of every thing ;
 Love all below, and worship all above.
 All animals are living hieroglyphs.
 The dashing dog, and stealthy-stepping cat,
 Hawk, bull, and all that breathe, mean something
 more
 To the true eye than their shapes shew ; for all
 Were made in love, and made to be beloved.
 Thus must he think as to earth's lower life,
 Who seeks to win the world to thought and love,
 As doth the bard, whose habit is all kindness
 To every thing.

Helen. I love to hear of such.
 Could we but think with the intensity
 We love with, one might do great things, I think.

Festus. Kindness is wisdom. There is none in life
 But needs it and may learn ; eye-reasoning man,
 And spirit unassisted, unobscured.

Helen. How cruel, men ; not only selfwards, but
 To lives below them ; lives God hath not thought
 Unworthy Him to make, we ought not deem
 Unworthy of our care ; but though create
 To serve or suffer, treat, as made by Him
 With high humanity. Yet in their death
 Look how men wanton ! till the heart it grieves
 Scarcely, when these, in blind revenge of blood
 Causelessly shed, retaliate death for death ;
 As when in icy seas the barb-gored whale
 Drags his tormentors deathwards ; and though these
 For life kill, others slay for play, as still
 In Zetland, where betimes some ruthless wight
 Scaling the scaur, in sport the nests despoils
 Of auk or gull ; they, crowding clamorous round,
 Intruded on, insulted, injured, sore

Besiege his ears, until with querulous wing,
One stern and ancient fowl assails his eyne;
His hold gives way; he topples headlong down,
From crag to crag rebounding, till the sea,
For many a ghastly loan responsible,
Seals up the expiring secret; and, avenged,
God's feathered kind scream triumph. Him, at home,
Or dame, or mother, by her drowsy wheel,
Expects; and sharpens through the ominous night
Her ears, to catch his customary step,
Whose ghost now flaunts the breakers; or, far off,
Lamps the lone wold. I cannot brook to see
This needless, useless, senseless, slaughter strewn
Round earth as though death-torments were a boon
We owed it to our kingdom to impart,
Impartially, to all created life.
But how all minor cruelties of man
Are summed in war, conclusive of all crimes!
How is it Christian nations boast of war,
When not defensive, indefensible?
How boast to steep the earth in brother blood
Deeper than heathen? Doth not current time
Shew deadliest wit at work how most to slay?
Scan earth, and mark the myriads massed in arms
Scowling defiant hate; burning to reave
Each other of domain, state, power; or prove
The dominance of race! What hosts arrayed
In battailous pomp meet, east and west, the eye!
More than now, never hath the world beheld.
Not that so vast to immemorial age
Sacred, of Scythic birth, which, floodlike, surged
Far round the mount Armenian; nor so wide,
Those once the crutchéd hermit's eyes beheld
Uprist in bodily answer to his prayers,
By Danube's bank; whence hardy knighthood's shield;
Nor hosts immixed that by Propontic wave
Its ranks deployed by nations to salute
The golden-footed dame, who sheathed in steel
Her liliated breast, and couched her lance for love
Of Christ; and with the hope of wresting back
From infidels His hallowed tomb, led on,
With jewelled rein, and morion snowy plumed,

Her maiden chivalry and glittering queans,
 Luckless ; for ah ! their virgin valour quailed,
 Ere yet the manlier might of stern Islam
 Bounded upon the spoil ; nor, till unhorsed,
 Unhelmed, knew these the delicate foe they proved,
 Flower-breathed, as in the moon of blossoms earth.
 Nor that by sunny Tours where fell the force
 Moorish, beneath the Frankland monarch's mace,
 Which Europe saved from turban and Koraun ;
 Nor those above whose heads the flaming sword,
 Two-handled, and two-edged with pest and fire,
 Of militant angel pierced the clouds, and slew,
 At one stroke, squadrons.

Festus. True ! I hold with thee,
 Light of my heart ! How, still, from age to age,
 Prevails the universal lust of death
 And vulgar slaughter ; war of all bad things
 Worst, and man's crowning crime, save when for faith
 Or freedom waged ; but when for greed of ground
 Or mere dominion, cursed of man and God.
 As when the clans Mogul—which late had left
 Their maze of mountains the high plains that bound—
 Whence Buzanghir and all his valorous brood,
 Heads of the golden horde, and sons of light,
 Whom Alancova to her sun-spouse bare
 At treble birth ; the lords of throne and crown,
 Khaliph's, or King's, or Tzar's, which Zinghis gained,
 Or filial Kublai, with all-suasive sword,
 Bright ravisher of souls, into one realm
 Rounded and died ; strict Theists they who held
 In God and their own swords, a brief, brave creed,—
 O'er Europe's quaking heart careered, and like
 Sunblast on greensward, graved their fiery name
 In blazing towns and harvests blackening ; woke,
 With tramp terrific of their horses' hoofs,
 The slumbering nations ; to its stony foot
 Burned Breslaw, and at Wollstadt won a field
 Red with the gore of Christian chivalry,
 But fled from their own conquest ; fled aghast ;
 And perished in the wilds where they were born ;
 And when in later times and distant lands,
 By countless wrongs indignant made, distraught,

The Azteks for their lord, and woe-crowned head,
 Stern Moctezuma, archer of the Heavens,—
 Beset by bigots, falsely named white gods,
 Their deeds of black fiends rather savouring,
 But, steel-clad cowards, strong in fulminant arms,
 Instalment thought of thunder at command,
 By the plume-mailed barbarians, gold who held
 The sun's bright tearlets—sought in vain to buy
 Humanity of Christians, infidel
 These to earth's purest faith, nor capable
 To preach by blood Christ's creed; or southward, where
 His quadripartite world the Ynga ruled,
 Earth's universal passion wasting not
 On king-faced coin, but hallowing every mote
 To beauty, or to Deity, till came,
 Crowding, the guests profane, with priest and cross,
 Who slaughtering thousands of his flock, and him
 Incarcerating bade pile his prison walls
 With the soul-soiling dross they hungered for,
 Ere he should know release, his sole release.
 Death;—how humiliated must all men feel,
 Dumb with unmeasurable guilt, to know
 That for these base and vicious ends Christ's faith
 Hath been blasphemed, and in His peaceful name
 Oft hath the invader vaunted him of wrongs,
 And gloried in the havoc of his hand.

Helén. Yea, even Christians sometimes may do well;
 As when by gay Chalons the Paynim Hun,
 His hosts arrayed contemptuous of the faith
 Which nerved their arms who conquered, wrongly he
 Deeming in godless numbers victory lay;
 Just cause had they to thank God, and to wave
 The sword of sacred triumph in His cause,
 One with the cause of freedom, faith, and life.

Student. But now with that thou spakest of before,
 This privileged interceptress of all speech
 Deflect as from a gem's face, thought's bright rays;
 Go on, I pray. I came to be informed.
 Thou knowest my ambition, and I joy
 To feel thou feedest it with purest food.

Festus. I cannot tell thee all I feel; and know
 But little save myself, and am not ashamed

To say, that I have studied my own life,
 And know it is like to a tear-blistered letter,
 Which holdeth fruit and proof of deeper feeling
 Than the poor pen can utter, or the eye
 Discover ; and that often my heart's thoughts
 Will rise and shake my breast, as madmen shake
 The stanchions of their dungeons, and howl out.

Helen. But thou wast telling us of poesie,
 And the kind nature-hearted bards.

Festus. I was.

I knew one once—he was a friend of mine :
 I knew him well ; his mind, habits, and works,
 Taste, temper, temperament, and every thing ;
 Yet with as kind a heart as beats, he was
 Earthlike no sooner made than marred. Though young
 He wrote amid the ruins of his heart ;
 They were his throne and theme—like some lone king,
 Who tells the story of the land he lost,
 And how he lost it.

Student. Tell us more of him.

Helen. Nay, but it saddens thee.

Festus. 'Tis like enough.

We slip away like shadows into shade ;
 We end, and make no mark we had begun ;
 We come to nothing, like a pure intent.
 When we have hoped, sought, striven, and lost our aim,
 Then the truth fronts us, beaming out of darkness,
 Like a white brow, through its overshadowing hair—
 As though the day were overcast, my Helen !
 But I was speaking of my friend. He was
 Quick, generous, simple, obstinate in end,
 High-hearted from his youth ; his spirit rose
 In many a glittering fold and gleamy crest,
 Hydra-like to its hindrance ; mastering all,
 Save one thing—love, and that out-hearted him.
 Nor did he think enough, till it was over,
 How bright a thing he was breaking, or he would
 Surely have shunned it, nor have let his life
 Be pulled to pieces like a rose by a child.
 And his heart's passions made him oft do that
 Which made him writhe to think on what he had done,
 And thin his blood by weeping at a night.

If madness wrought the sin, the sin wrought madness,
 And made a round of ruin. It is sad
 To see the light of beauty wane away ;
 Know eyes are dimming, bosom shrivelling, feet
 Losing their spring, and limbs their lily roundness ;
 But it is worse to feel our heart-spring gone,
 To lose hope, care not for the coming thing,
 And feel all things go to decay with us,
 As 'twere our life's eleventh month : and yet
 All this he went through young.

Helen. Poor soul ! I should
 Have loved him for his sorrows.

Festus. It is not love
 Brings sorrow, but love's objects.

Student. Then he loved.

Festus I said so. I have seen him, when he hath had
 A letter from his lady dear, he blessed
 The paper that her hand had travelled over,
 And her eye looked on ; and would think he saw
 Gleams of that light she lavished from her eyes
 Wandering amid the words of love there traced,
 Like glow-worms among beds of flowers. He seemed
 To bear with being but because she loved him.
 She was the sheath wherein his soul had rest,
 As hath a sword from war : and he at night
 Would solemnly and singularly curse
 Each minute that he had not thought of her.

Helen. Now that was like a lover ! and she loved
 Him, and him only.

Festus. Well, perhaps it was so.
 But he could not restrain his heart, but loved
 In that voluptuous purity of taste
 Which dwells on beauty coldly, and yet kindly,
 As night-dew, whensoever he met with beauty.

Helen. It was a pity, that inconstancy—
 If she he loved were but as good and fair
 As he was worthy of.

Student. It was his way.

Festus. There is a dark and bright to every thing ;
 To everything but beauty such as thine,
 And that is all bright. If a fault in him,
 'Twas one which made him do the sweetest wrongs .

Man ever did. And yet a whisper went
 That he did wrong : and if that whisper had
 Echo in him or not, it mattered little ;
 Or right or wrong, he were alike unhappy.
 Ah me ! ah me ! that there should be so much
 To call up love, so little to delight !
 The best enjoyment is half disappointment
 To that we mean or would have in this world.
 And there were many strange and sudden lights
 Beckoned him towards them ; they were wreckers' lights :
 But he shunned these, and righted when she rose,
 Moon of his life, that ebbd and flowed with her.
 A sea of sorrow struck him, but he held
 On ; dashed all sorrow from him as a bark
 Spray from her bow bounding : he lifted up
 His head, and the deep ate his shadow merclly.

Helen. A poet not in love is out at sea ;
 He must have a lay-figure.

Festus. I mean not
 To screen, but to describe this friend of mine.

Helen. Describe the lady, too ; of course she was
 Above all praise and all comparison.

Festus. Why, true. Her heart was all humanity,
 Her soul all God's ; in spirit and in form,
 Like fair. Her cheek had the pale pearly pink
 Of seashells, the world's sweetest tint, as though
 She lived, one half might deem, on roses sopped
 In silver dew ; she spake as with the voice
 Of spherul harmony which greets the soul
 When at the hour of death the saved one knows
 His sister angels near ; her eye was as
 The golden pane the setting sun doth just
 Imblaze ; which shews, till Heaven comes down again,
 All other lights but grades of gloom ; her dark,
 Long rolling locks were as a stream the slave
 Might search for gold and searching find. Her frown—

Helen. Nay, could she frown ?

Festus. Ay, but a radiant frown
 In common with the stars, which men malign
 Who call malignant. Stars are always kind.

Helen. Enough. I have her picture perfect. Cease.

Student. What were his griefs ?

Festus.

He who hath most of heart

Knows most of sorrow ; not a thing he saw
Nor did, but was to him, at times, a woe ;
At times indifferent, at times a joy.

Folly and sin and memory make a curse
Wherewith the future fires may vie in vain.
The sorrows of the soul are graver still.

Student. Where and when did he study ? Did he mix
Much with the world, or was he a recluse ?

Festus. He had no times of study, and no place ;
All places and all times to him were one.
His soul was like the wind-harp, which he loved,
And sounded only when the spirit blew.
Sometimes in feasts and follies, for he went
Life-like through all things ; and his thoughts then rose
Like sparkles in the bright wine, brighter still.
Sometimes in dreams, and then the shining words
Would wake him in the dark before his face.
All things talked thoughts to him. The sea went mad,
And the wind whined as 'twere in pain, to shew
Each one his meaning ; and the awful sun
Thundered his thoughts into him ; and at night
The stars would whisper theirs, the moon sigh hers.
The spirit speaks all tongues and understands ;
Both God's and angel's, man's and all dumb things,
Down to an insect's inarticulate hum,
And an inaudible organ. And it was
The spirit spake to him of everything ;
And with the moony eyes like those we see,
Thousands on thousands, crowding air in dreams,
Looked into him its mighty meanings, till
He felt the power fulfil him, as a cloud
In every fibre feels the forming wind.
He spake the world's one tongue ; in earth and Heaven
There is but one, it is the word of truth.
To him the eye let out its hidden meaning ;
And young and old made their hearts over to him ;
And thoughts were told to him as unto none
Save one who heareth said and unsaid, all.
And his heart held these as a grate its gleeds,
Where others warm them.

Student.

I would I had known him.

Festus. All things were inspiration unto him :
 Wood, wold, hill, field, sea, city, solitude,
 And crowds and streets, and man where'er he was;
 And the blue eye of God which is above us ;
 Brook-bounded pine spinnies where spirits flit ;
 And haunted pits the rustic hurries by,
 Where cold wet ghosts sit ringing jingling bells ;
 Old orchard's leaf-roofed aisles, and red-cheeked load ;
 And the blood-coloured tears which yew trees weep
 O'er churchyard graves, like murderers remorseful.
 The dark green rings where fairies sit and sup,
 Crushing the violet dew in the acorn cup ;
 Where by his new-made bride the bridegroom sips,
 The white moon shimmering on their longing lips ;
 The large o'erloaded wealthy-looking wains,
 Quietly swaggering home through leafy lanes,
 Leaving on all low branches, as they come,
 Straws for the birds, ears of the harvest home.
 Summer's warm soil or winter's cruel sky,
 Clear, cold, and icy-blue like a sea-eagle's eye ;
 All things to Him bare thoughts of minstrelsy.
 He drew his light from that he was amidst,
 As doth a lamp from air, which hath itself
 Matter of light although it shew not. His
 Was but the power to light what might be lit,
 He met a muse in every lovely maid ;
 And learned a song from every lip he loved.
 But his heart ripened most 'neath southern eyes,
 Which sunned their sweets into him all day long :
 For fortune called him southwards, towards the sun.

Helen. Did he love music ?

Festus. The only music he
 Or learned or listened to was from the lips
 Of her he loved ; and then he learned by heart
 Her words, delicious as the candied dew,
 And durable, which gems the rose, on shores
 Pacific, where the westering sun hath sown
 The soil conceptive with the seed of gold.
 Albeit she would try to teach him tunes,
 And put his fingers on the keys ; but he
 Could only see her eyes, and hear her voice,
 And feel her touch.

Helen. Why he was much like thee.

Festus. We had some points in common. When we love,

All air breathes music, like the branchy bower,
By Indian bards feigned, which, with ceaseless song,
Answers the sun's bright raylets; nor till eve,
Folds her melodious leaves, and all night rests;
Drinking deep draughts of silence.

Student. Was he proud?

Festus. Lowliness is the base of every virtue:
And he who goes the lowest builds the safest.
My God keeps all His pity for the proud.

Student. Was he world-wise?

Festus. The only wonder is
He knew so much, leading the life he did.

Student. Yet it may seem less strange when we think back,

That we, in the dark chamber of the heart,
Sitting alone, see the world tabled to us;
And the world wonders how recluses know
So much, and most of all how we know them.
It is they who paint themselves upon our hearts
In their own lights and darknesses, not we;
One stream of light is to us from above,
And that is that we see by, light of God.

Festus. We do not make our thoughts; they grow in us
Like grain in wood: the growth is of the skies,
Which are of nature, nature is of God.
The world is full of glorious likenesses.
The poet's power is to sort these out,
And to make music from the common strings
With which the world is strung; to make the dumb
Earth utter heavenly harmony, and draw
Life clear, and sweet, and harmless as spring water,
Welling its way through flowers. Without faith,
Illimitable faith, strong as a state's
In its own might, in God, no bard can be.
All things are signs of other and of nature.
It is at night we see Heaven moveth, and
A darkness thick with suns. The thoughts we think
Subsist the same in God as stars in Heaven.
And as these specks of light will prove great worlds,

When we approach them sometime free from flesh,
 So too our thoughts will become magnified
 To mindlike things immortal. And as space
 Is but a property of God wherein
 Is laid all matter, other attributes
 May be the infinite homes of mind and soul.
 And thoughts rise from our souls, as from the sea
 The clouds sublimed in Heaven. The cloud is cold,
 Although ablaze with lightning—though it shine
 At all points like a constellation; so
 We live not to ourselves, our work is life;
 In bright and ceaseless labour as a star
 Which shineth unto all worlds but itself.

Helen. And were this friend and bard of whom thou
 speakest,
 And she whom he did love, happy together?

Festus. True love is ever tragic, grievous, grave.
 Bards and their beauties are like double stars,
 One in their bright effect.

Helen. Whose light is love.

Student. Or is it poesie thou meanest?

Festus. Both :

For love is poesie—it doth create;
 From fading features, dim soul, doubtful heart,
 And this world's wretched happiness, a life
 Which is as near to Heaven as are the stars.
 They parted; and she named Heaven's judgment seat
 As their next place of meeting; and it was kept
 By her, at least, so far that nowhere else
 Could it be made until the day of doom.

Helen. So soon men's passion passes! yea it sinks
 Like foam into the troubled wave which bore it.
 Merciful God! let me entreat Thy mercy!
 I have seen all the woes of men—pain, death,
 Remorse, and worldly ruin; they are little,
 Weighed with the woe of woman when forsaken
 By him she loved and trusted. Hear, too, thou!
 Lady of Heaven, Mother of God and man,
 Who made the world His brother, one with God—
 Maid-mother! mould of God, who wrought in thee
 By model as he doth in the world's womb,
 So that the universe is great with God;

Thou in whom God did deify Himself,
 Betaking Him into mortality,
 As in Thy Son He took it into Him,
 And from the temporal and eternal made
 Of the soul-world one same and ever God !
 Oh, for the sake of thine own womanhood,
 Pray away aught of evil from her soul ;
 And take her out of anguish unto Thee,
 Always, as thou didst this one !

Festus.

Who doth not

Believe that that he loveth cannot die ?
 There is no mote of death in thine eye's beams
 To hint of dust, or darkness, or decay ;
 Eclipse upon eclipse, and death on death ;
 No ! immortality sits mirrored there,
 Like a fair face long looking on itself ;
 Yet shalt thou lie in death's angelic garb,
 As in a dream of dress, my beautiful :
 The worm shall trail across thine unsunned sweets ,
 And feast him on the heart men pined to death for ;
 Yea, have a happier knowledge of thy beauties
 Than best-loved lover's dream e'er duped him with.

Helen. It is unkind to think of me in this wise ;

Beside that I may die by sea, or fire,
 Or gulped down quick by earthquakes, who can tell ?
 Surely the stars must feel that they are bright,
 In beauty, number, nature, infinite ;
 And the strong sense we have of God in us
 Makes me believe my soul can never cease.
 The temples perish, but the God still lives.

Festus. It is therefore that I love thee ; for that when

The fiery perfection of the world,
 The sun, shall be a shadow and burnt out,
 There is an impulse to eternity
 Raised by this moment's love.

Helen.

I pray it may !

Time is the crescent shape to bounded eye
 Of what is ever perfect unto God.
 The bosom heaves to Heaven, and to the stars ;
 Our very hearts throb upwards, our eyes look ;
 Our aspirations always are divine :
 Yet is it in the gloom of soul we see

Most of the God about us, as at night.
For then the soul, like the mother-maid of Christ,
Is overshadowed by the Holy Spirit ;
And in creative darkness doth conceive
Its humanized Divinity of life.

Festus. Think then God shews His face to us no less
In spiritual darkness than in light.

Student. But of thy friend ? I would hear more of him.
Perhaps much happiness in friendship made
Amends for his love's sorrows.

Festus. Ask me not.

Helen. But loved he never after ? Came there none
To roll the stone from his sepulchral heart,
And sit in it an angel ?

Festus. Ah, my life !
My more than life, my immortality !
Both man and womankind belie their nature
When they are not kind : and thy words are kind,
And beautiful, and loving like thyself ;
Thine eye and thy tongue's tone, and all that speak
Thy soul, are like it. There's a something in
The shape of harps as though they had been made
By music : beauty's the effect of soul.
And he of whom thou askest loved again.
Could'st thou have loved one who was unlike men ?
Whose heart was wrinkled long before his brow ?
Who would have cursed himself if he had dared
Tempt God to ratify his curse in fire :
And yet with whom to look on beauty was
A need, a thirst, a passion ?

Helen. Yes, I think
I could have loved him ; but, no—not unless
He was like thee ; unless he had been thee.
Tell me, what was it rendered him so wretched
At heart ?

Festus. I will not tell thee.

Student. But tell me
How and on what he wrote, this friend of thine ?

Festus. Love, mirth, woe, pleasure, was in turn his
theme,
And the great good which beauty does the soul ;
And the God-made necessity of things.

And like that noble knight in olden tale,
Who changed his armour's hue at each fresh charge,
By virtue of his lady-love's strange ring ;
So that none knew him save his private page,
And she who cried, God save him, every time
He brake spears with the brave till he quelled all—
So he applied him to all themes that came ;
Loving the most to breast the rapid deeps
Where others had been drowned ; and heeding nought
Where danger might not fill the place of fame.
And 'mid the magic circle of those sounds,
His lyre rayed out, spell-bound himself he stood,
Like a stilled storm. It is no task for suns
To shine. He knew himself a bard ordained,
More than inspired, of God, inspirited :—
Making himself like an electric rod
A lure for lightning feelings ; and his words
Felt like the things that fall in thunder, which
The mind, when in a dark, hot, cloudful state,
Doth make metallic, meteoric, ball-like.
He spake to spirits with a spirit tongue,
Who came compelled by wizard word of truth,
And rayed them round him from the ends of Heaven.
For as be all bards, he was born of beauty,
And with a natural fitness to draw down
All tones and shades of beauty to his soul ;
Even as the rainbow-tinted shell, which lies
Miles deep at bottom of the sea, hath all
Colours of skies and flowers, and gems, and plumes ;
And all by nature, which doth reproduce
Like loveliness in seeming opposites.
And Nature loved him, for he was to her
Faithful and loyal, tending well the weal
Of every life, or blood, or sap, was hers ;
And his own balancing with an insect's life,
Though but to help the beetle on his back,
Often and often. Pain to life is pain
To nature's soul, and any needless death
A deadly sin. Him, therefore, in august
Silence she edified in deeper things
Than the world's babble robs of ; speaking him
In that instinctive Paradisal tongue.

Known now to nature, poet-priests, and God,
 Who out of clouds, flowers, fountains, dreams, and stars,
 Weave a commutual language; and conveyed
 Clear to his eyes her veiled blaze of light,
 And led him by the hand, and made him trace,
 'Neath Time's disguising dust, the broad-based truth,
 And iron impress, ineffaceable,
 Of the eternal die. Divinerlike,
 He ate the hearts of things ere yet he could
 Prophecy of them; or predict of worlds
 By augury of angels; or foresee
 Life's round career accomplished in the skies.
 As though his ear had been by serpents lippled,
 He wist the world of life. Of every tribe
 Of living things the key-spell he could speak,
 And entered in its presence with the sign
 Of perfect acceptation. He of all
 Was free; a branch from off the tree of light,
 Heaven-planted 'midst the wood we all indwell.
 There was a light in death itself to him,
 And the to-come had a clear presence. Thus
 Ofttimes, at eve, together, eyeing Heaven,
 Creating stars, we sat, and stretching forth
 The eagle-headed sceptre of the soul,
 Ruled them at ease enthroned; with gifts of power
 Widening the empyrean world on world.
 And dropping down the fathom-line of thought
 Into the future years, conceive what 'twere
 To quit this world's necessitated deeps,
 These strange librating bonds of birth and death;
 And sweep into the still, free, sphere on high,
 On faith and truth, our undeveloped wings,
 Like to a vital wind, invisible,
 Yet firmed and bounded in a beauteous form;
 To give up life for Being, and be gods:—
 Such were the heights we aimed at, such the deeps
 He reached and yet alive; for, sooth to say,
 His soul was consonant to a certain star,
 And coætaneous with it. When he died
 The star died also.

Helen.

Make a note of that.

Student. Now, I beseech thee, be not as a stream

Which publisheth its shallows, but keeps all
 Its deep things to itself; what dost thou mean?
 That all things have a soul, an inner life, .
 I much believe, such things as trees and flowers,
 The mountains and the rivers, seas, lakes, stars;
 That substance implies essence, essence life;
 That what to us mere matter shews may shew
 As mentally to others; and that men
 Are but the invert shadows of the Gods.
 So at the fiery martyrdom of earth,
 When all the starry sisterhood of Heaven
 Shall sigh to see the blazing pyre, our souls
 Will with its spheral spirit rise, and there
 Abide in it for ever; all the forms
 Of life beatified and beautified.

Helen. What if it were that life commencing first
 In kind atomic, step by step, through all
 The countless grades, vegetive, animal,
 Of nature should progress at last to man,
 Possessed with all the intermediate powers
 Of all the schooling spheres he had passed through, till
 This mere noviciate of humanity,
 Encumbered with the veil of flesh, expired,
 The spirit takes the plenar vows of truth;
 And enters on the sanctity of Heaven?

Festus. Our life is like the wizard's charmed ring:
 Death's heads, and loathsome things fill up the ground;
 But spirits wing about and wait on us,
 While yet the hour of enchantment is.
 And while we keep in, we are safe, and can
 Force them to do our bidding. And he raised
 The rebel in himself, and in his mind
 Walked with him through the world.

Student.

He wrote of this?

Festus. He planned a poem, such as man might name,
 Prophetic, of Time's afterworld;—the soul
 Raised to firm stand-point mid eternity,
 Where present, passed, and coming all converge,—
 The poem of the future.

Student.

What was said of it?

Festus. Oh, much was said—much more than understood;
 One said, that he was mad; another, wise;

Another, wisely mad. The book is there.
Judge thou among them.

Student. Well, but, who said what?

Festus. Some said that he blasphemed: and these men
lied

To all eternity, unless such men
Be saved, when God shall rase that lie from life,
And from His own eternal memory:
But still the word is lied; though it were writ
In honeydew, upon a lily leaf,
With quill of nightingale, like love letters
From Oberon sent to the bright Titania,
Fairest of all the fays—for that he used
The name of God as spirits use it, barely,
Yet surely more sublime in nakedness,
Statuelike, than in a whole tongue of dress.
Thou knowest, God! that to the full of worship
All things are worshipful; and Thy great name,
In all its awful brevity, hath nought
Unholy breeding in it, but doth bless
Rather the tongue that utters it; for me,
I ask no higher office than to fling
My spirit at thy feet, and cry Thy name
God! through eternity. The man who sees
Irreverence in that name, must have been used
To take that name in vain; and the same man
Would see obscenity in pure white statues.
Call all things by their names. Hell, call thou Hell;
Archangel, call archangel; and God, God.

Student. And what said he of such?

Festus. He held his peace

A season, as a tree its sap till spring,
Preparing to unfold itself, and let
All rigour do its worst, which only served
To harden him, though nothing nesh at first.
And then he said at last, what, at the first,
He deemed would have been seen by other men;
By men, at least, above low-water mark,
Who take it, they lead others; that it is they
Who set their shoulders to the stalled world's wheel,
And give it a hitch forwards.

Helen. There were some
Encouraged him with goodwill, surely?

Festus.

Many.

The kind, the noble, and the able cheered him ;
 The lovely likewise : others knew he nought of.
 For, unlike those false brethren, who of old
 Sold their enlightener, and into duress cast
 The unfolders of high secrets ; far and near,
 All generous souls rejoiced in his, as one
 Which holding in itself the sacred power
 Thought to eternize, things divine achieves
 With infinite ease ; an earnest thus to all
 Of gifts to come ; as when young Jove, who now
 Had but dethroned his sire, nor lots yet cast
 With his Titanic kin for the world's sway ;
 In earth's first blaze of conquest Maia met,
 From out whose hallowed bosom lacteal life
 He erst had drawn ; she, bending close to his,
 Her sad, but luminous brow, with thought oppressed
 Of favour and dominion, him besought
 What sometime he would grant her for long love,
 And all the bounties of her mothering breast ;
 He, poor in all but immortality ;
 Earth was not his as yet, but only Heaven ;
 Touched her with hand Deific, and her form
 Flashing with light, flew upwards as a star,
 Insphered in air for ever. There she shines,
 Thankful and blessed ; not envious of the power
 That filled her earthly veins with astral life.
 So too the high and bright-souled sons of men
 Loved him and paid him praise, the more unsought.
 And yet he loved not praise, nor sighed for fame.
 Men's praise begets an awe of one's own self
 Within us, till we fear our heart, lest it,
 Magician-like, shew more than we can bear.
 Nor was he fameless ; but obscurity
 Hath many a sacred use. The clouds which hide
 The mental mountains rising nighest Heaven
 Are full of finest lightning, and a breath
 Can give those gathered shadows fearful life,
 And launch their light in thunder o'er the world.

Student. And thought he well of that he wrote ?*Festus.*

Perchance

Perchance we suffer, and perchance succeed.

Perchance he would his tongue had perished ere
It uttered half he said, from childhood up
To manhood, and so on; for much I heard
From him required expiation, much
Soul sacrifice and penance for heart-deeds
Which passion had accomplished; yea, perchance,
He wished, how vain! that fruitful heart and breast
Had withered like a witch's ere he had trained
The parasites of feeling that he did
About it; and perchance, for all I know,
He would his brain had died ere it conceived
One half the thought-seeds that took life in it,
And in his soul's dark sanctuary dwelt.
Yet his blue eye's dark ball grew greater with
Delight, and darker, as he viewed the things
He made; not monsters outside of the fane,
Grinning and howling, but seraphic forms,
Embodied thoughts of worship, wisdom, love;
Joining their fire-tipped wings across the shrine
Where his heart's relics lay, and where were wrought
Upon men's minds immortal miracles.

Student. Let us at last have done with miracles.
Bards are, I find, the most devout of men
Poems outlive religions; nay, they are
Religions; and thus striving to revive
The flagging faith which philosophic light
Too strong hath withered, know, I simply doubt
All outward revelation:—none or many.

Helen. Each race hath had its revelation here,
And will have better. Man in spirit one,
Shall in the spirit state, receive the true.

Student. But what if it be true that 'all is God;
Worship the passive sympathy of parts
Atomic with the mightier active mass,
As might a foam-drop worship the great sea;
All deities mere abstractions of man's mind,
And ultimate moral laws personified?
I hold my revelation in myself,
The God within me sacred and supreme.
Truest of men is he whose thoughts are highest,
Whose wishes noblest and most charitable;
Whose acts embody most both wish and thought,

The hand that doth a deed of ill, for that
 Purpose incarnates hell, if hell there be ;
 In our own brain, or secret-chambered heart
 The magic circle lies, wherein we raise
 Sprites, good or bad. With our own blood, it is,
 We pour libations to forbidden powers ;
 Or satisfy with expurgative fires,
 Fed from the fuel of unbounded grief,
 The offended God within us. Life's great laws
 Whereon the universe is based, by us
 Inviolable, and to us, holy, He
 Who makes, breaks never. This my creed, I hold
 He most believes who only God believes ;
 All else is superstition.

Festus. More than this
 Is, and is needed. Freedom not alone
 Is worthy adoration ; for myself,
 I glory less in liberties than laws.

Student. Man's mind is like the moon whose crescent
 orb
 Tops yonder hill ; the vastier volume, dark ;
 But 'tis not that which grows ; the virginal light,
 At first but just enough to affirm its life,
 At last, with total and resistless ray,
 Subdues the obscure sphere ; so reason wins
 From faith her shadowy world ; and knowledge hoards
 What ignorant belief hath lost for aye.
 Perchance we differ on these views. However ;
 Take up the book, and if thou understandest,
 Unfold it to me.

Festus. What I can, I will.
 Well I remember me of thee, poor book !
 But there is consolation even for thee.
 Fair hands have turned thee over, and bright eyes
 Sprinkled their sparkles o'er thee with their prayers.
 The poet's pen is the true divining rod
 Which trembles towards the inner founts of feeling ;
 Bringing to light and use, else hid from all,
 The many sweet clear sources which we have
 Of good and beauty in our own deep bosom ;
 And marks the variations of all mind,
 As doth the needle an air-investing storm's.

All nature in the poet's heart is limned
 In little, as in landscape-stones we see
 The swell of land, and groves, and running streams,
 Fresh from the wolds of Chaos; or perchance
 The imaged hint of antemundane life,
 A photograph of preëxistent light,
 Or Paradisal sun. So, in his mind
 The broad conditions of the world are graven,
 Thoroughly and grandly; in accord wherewith
 His life is ruled to be and eke to bear.
 Wisdom he wills not only for himself,
 But undergoes the sacred rites whereby
 The privilege he hath earned he may promulge,
 And all men make the partners of his light.
 Between the priestly and the laic powers
 The poet stands, a bright and living link;
 Now chanting odes divine and sacred spells,
 Now with fine magic, holy and austere,
 Inviting angels or evoking fiends;
 And now, in festive guise arrayed, his brow
 With golden fillet bounden round, alone
 Earnest to charm the throng that celebrates
 The games now—now the mysteries of life,
 With truths ornate, and pleasure's choicest plea.
 Thus he becomes the darling of mankind,
 Armed with the instinct both of rule and right,
 And the world's minion, privileged to speak,
 When all beside, the medley mass, are mute;
 Distils his soul into a song, and dies.

Student. How does the book begin, go on, and end?

Festus. It has a plan, but no plot. Life hath none.

Helen. Tell us, love; we will listen, and not speak.

I wish I understood it, for I know

You would rather hear me than yourselves talk.

Student.

Surely.

I would give up half the organs in my head,
 Besides all undiscovered faculties,
 To list to such a lecturer; and then
 Have quite enough, perhaps, to comprehend.

Helen. 'Twere needless that, to one half-witted now.

Festus. This time is equal to all time that's passed,
 Of like extent, nor needs to hide its face

Before the future. Each is missioned here.
Our God is still as kind, and all His gifts
Like wondrous, like unlimited, like fair,
As when the wind first blew. Man is to God
That he hath ever been. Still shines the sun
As keen and pure on the grey rotting-rock,
As on the universal matter once,
Ere now marmoreal floods had spread their couch
Of perdurable snow, or granite wrought
Its skyward impulse from earth's hearth of fire
Up to insanest heights; or thunder oped
His cloudy lips and spake. And still to them
Who live alone with nature and with God,
Smile with the sun and sadden with the moon,
The elements their brethren, e'en as men,
Come gifts unasked, unmeasured, like the light
Which lights at countless points the formless whole.
Wherefore let us too bless God and take heart;
All ages are His children; and all worlds
Form from His breath like dewdrops out of air;
He life in all infusing. Nor is this
An outlawed orb nor excommunicate.
All things He makes, He loves and blesses too,
And renders rich with gifts and powers; that each
Teaching themselves and others, Him may learn.
One gift to some, to some another. Thus
Nature is justly deemed of but by few,
And wisdom scantily welcomed; for her fare
Lacks dainties, though to all she setteth forth
Her homely bread, and hospitable wine,
And sacred salt. And though we should by art
Bring earth to gas, and desiccate the sea
To a thin sheet of vapour, we shall yet
Find in the end, the volume of the world
Is legible alone to those who use
The interlinear version of the light;
Which is the spirit's, and given within ourselves.
Poetry is itself a thing of God;
He made His prophets poets: and the more
We feel of poesie do we become
Like God in love and power,—under-makers.
And song is of the supernatural

Natural utterance ; and solely can
Speak the unbounded beauty of the world,
And the premortal concords of pure mind.
All great lays, equals to the minds of men,
Deal more or less with the Divine, and have
For end some good of mind or soul of man.
The mind is this world's, but the soul is God's !
The wise man joins them here all in his power.
The high and holy works, amid lesser lays,
Stand up like churches among village cots :
And it is joy to think that in every age,
However much the world was wrong therein,
The greatest works of mind or hand have been
Done unto God. So may they ever be !
It shews the strength of wish we have to be great ;
And the sublime humility of might.
True fiction hath in it a higher end
Than fact ; it is the possible compared
With what is merely positive ; and gives
To the conceptive soul an inner world,
A higher, ampler Heaven than that wherein
The nations sun themselves. In that bright state
Are met the mental creatures of the men,
Whose names are writ highest on the rounded crown
Of fame's triumphal arch ; the shining shapes
Which star the skies of that invisible land,
Which, whosoe'er would enter, let him learn ;—
It is not enough to draw forms fair and lively,
Their conduct likewise must be beautiful :
A hearty holiness must crown the work,
As a gold cross the minster dome ; and shew,
Like that instonement of divinity.
That the whole building doth belong to God.
And for this cause the book before us, like
The needled angle of a high church spire,
Points its sole end to God the Father's glory,
From all eternity seen ; making clear
His might and love in saving sinful man.
For though sin-saturated, like a wick
In wax, consuming with cathartic fire,
The spirit yet enshrined in Heaven shall shine,
A burning glory dedicate to God.

One bard shews God as He deals with states and kings ;
Another, as He dealt with the first man ;
Another, as with Heaven and earth and hell ;
Ours, as He loves to order a chance soul,
Chosen out of the world, from first to last ;
With whom, too, ends man's universal race.
All points are central to the infinite :
Therefore it is that Deity which fills
The spheres, unnumbered but of Him who made
The space-existent whole, one human heart
With equal power and specialty inspires.
And all along it is the heart of man
Emblemed, created and creative mind.
It is a statued mind and naked heart
Which is struck out. Other bards draw men dressed
In manners, customs, forms, appearances,
Laws, places, times, and countless accidents
Of peace or polity : to him these are not ;
He makes no mention, takes no compt of them :
But shews, however great his doubts, sins, trials,
Whatever earthborn pleasures soil man's soul,
What power soever he may gain of evil,
That still, till death, time is ; that God's great Heaven
Stands open day and night to man and spirit :
For all are of the race of God, and have
In themselves good. The life-writ of a heart,
Whose firmest prop and highest meaning was
The hope of serving God as poet-priest ;
And the belief that He would not put back
Love-offerings, though brought to Him by hands
Unclean and earthy, even as fallen man's
Must be ; and most of all, the thankful show
Of His high power and goodness in redeeming
And blessing souls that love Him, spite of sin
And their old earthy strain,—these are the aims,
The doctrines, truths, and staple of the story.
What theme sublimer than soul being saved ?
'Tis the bard's aim to shew the mind-made world
Without within ; how the soul stands with God,
And the unseen realities about us.
It is a view of life spiritual
And earthly. Let all look upon it, then,
In the same light it was drawn and coloured in ;

In faith in that the writer too hath faith.
Albeit an effect, and not a cause,
Faith is a higher faculty than reason,
Though of the brightest power of revelation ;
As the snow-headed mountain rises o'er
The lightning, and applies itself to Heaven.
We know in day-time there are stars about us,
Just as at night, and name them what and where,
By sight of science ; so by faith we know,
Although we may not see them till our night,
That spirits are about us ; and believe,
That, to a spirit's eye, all Heaven may be
As full of angels as a beam of light
Of motes. As spiritual, it shews all
Classes of life, perhaps, above our kind,
Known to tradition, reason, or God's word,
Whose bright foundations are the heights of Heaven.
As earthly, it embodies most the life
Of youth, its powers, its aims, its deeds, its failings ;
And, as a sketch of world-life, it begins
And ends, and rightly, in Heaven and with God ;
While Heaven is also in the midst thereof.
God, or all good, the evil of the world,
And man, wherein are both, are each displayed.
The mortal is the model of all men ;
All in his fate involving, friends, loves, foes,
As draws the sun his children circling round
Heaven's infinite, to his eternal end.
The foibles, follies, trials, sufferings ;
And manifest and manifold are they—
Of a young, hot, unworld-schooled heart that has
Had its own way in life, and wherein all
May see some likeness of their own,—'tis these
Attract, unite, and sunlike, concentrate
The ever-moving system of our feelings.
The hero is the world-man, in whose heart
One passion stands for all, the most indulged ;
The love of power, of knowledge ; love of love.
The scenes wherein he plays his part are life,
A sphere whose centre is co-heavenly
With its divine original and end.
Like life, too, as a whole, the story hath
A moral, and each scene one, as in life,

One universal and peculiar truth ;
 Shining upon it like the quiet moon
 Illustrating the obscure unequal earth ;
 And though these scenes to careless eyes may seem
 Irregular, and rough, and unconnected,
 Like to the stones at Stonehenge ; though convolved,
 And in primæval mystery, still a use,
 A meaning and a purpose may be marked
 Among them of a temple reared to God :
 The meaning alway dwelling in the word,
 in secret sanctity, like a golden toy
 Mid Beauty's orbéd bosom. Scenes of earth
 And Heaven are mixed, as flesh and soul in man.
 Eternity pertains alone to God ;
 And immortality to man ; to those
 Which reason lack, life only. Laws there are .
 Twain, in the which man walks ; the law of law,
 Of custom, conscience, creed, time, circumstance ;
 Law superficial this ; the other is
 To those which breathe the light, the law of laws,
 Eternal, spiritual, central. These
 To mix breeds chaos, and yet not to mix
 Impossible to cultivated man.
 The more developed the interior law
 The clearer things will brighten, till at last
 The whole world shines translucent, and we live
 Priests, prophets, princes, all predestinate,
 Coæval with the eldest of the Heavens.
 Earth is the floor of Heaven ; in all we see
 The great world-worker, the eternal Lord,
 And operative Omnipotent, in all
 Sunlike the sole inhabitant of Heaven,
 The dweller in each fairy orb of dew.
 He, the all Parent of the seed Divine ;
 He, the eternal elements of Heaven,
 The golden generations of the light,
 Begets, brings forth. The world is God's great will
 In action, Heaven in repose. The soul
 Breathed into time, He aye at last translates
 Into celestial bliss, the life divine,
 The primal, final, total state of Heaven,
 And normal perfectness in Deity.

All that is good is deathless, as of God.
Even in the petty segment of this life
Our will involves our capability ;
And in the vast conditions of the eterne,
The possible, the probable ; and that,
The infinite becoming definite,
The pure conclusive certainty of Truth.
Necessity, like Light's electric force,
Is in ourselves and all things, and no more
Without us than within us ; and we live,
We of this mortal mixture, in the same law
As the pure colourless intelligence
Which dwells in Heaven, and the dead Hadeän shades
We will and act and talk of liberty ;
And all our wills and all our doings both
Are limited within this little life.
Freewill is but necessity in play,
The clattering of the golden reins which guide
The thunder-footed coursers of the sun.
The ship which goes to sea informed with fire,
Obeying only its own iron force,
Reckless of adverse tide, breeze dead, or weak
As infant's parting breath, too faint to stir
The feather held before it,—is as much
The appointed thrall of all the elements,
As the white-bosomed bark which woos the wind,
And when it dies desists. And thus with man ;
However contrary he sets his heart
To God, he is but working out His will ;
And, at an infinite angle, more or less
Obeying his own soul's necessity.
He only hath freewill whose will is fate.
Evil and good are God's right hand and left.
By ministry of evil good is clear,
And by temptation virtue : as of yore
Out of the grave rose God. Let this be deemed
Enough to justify the portion weighed
To the great spirit Evil, named herein.
If evil seem the most yet good most is :
As water may be deep and pure below,
Although the face be filmy for a time.
And if the spirit of evil seem more in

The work than God, it is but to work His will,
 Who therefore is all that the other seems.
 And evil is in almost every scene
 Of life more or less forward. Above all
 The mystery of the Trinity is held,
 Whose mystery is its reasonableness.
 All that is said of Deity is said
 In love and reverence. Be it so conceived.
 What comes before and after the great world,
 Deep in the secretest abyss of Light,
 And Being's most reserved immensity
 God alone knows eternally ; but with
 The present is communion creatural :
 He liveth in the sacrament of life.
 And for the soul of man delineate here—
 The outline half invisible—is shewn
 The self-sought grace, the self-aspiring truth
 And natural religion of the heart,
 Contrasting Godhood with humanity
 Ever ; whereas the Spirit aye unites.
 Temptation, and its workings in the heart,
 Whose faint and false resistance but assists,—
 Ambition, thirst of secret lore, joy, love—
 Riverlike, doubling sometimes on itself—
 Adventure, pleasure, travel heavenly
 And earthly, friendship, passion, poesie,
 Viewed ever in their spiritual end—
 And power, celestial happiness, and earth's
 Millennial foretaste, ill annihilate,
 The restoration of the angels lost,
 And one salvation universal given
 To all create,—all these, related, form,
 With much beside, the body of the work ;
 The islands, seas, and mainland of its orb.
 Thus much then for this book. It aims to mark
 The various beliefs, as well as doubts,
 Which hold or search by turns the mind of youth,
 Unresting anywhere. Its heresies,
 If such they be, are charitable ones ;
 For they who read not in the blessed belief
 That all souls may be saved, read to no end.
 We were made to be saved. We are of God.

While bards, all other, shew defiant Ill
Successful against God, ours, truelier taught,
Holds not the Omnipotent self-doomed to succumb
'Neath servants made for ends sealed in their birth.
But, as when artist, skilled in feats of fire,
The mother city of an empire shews
How, though heart-sick for slaughtered sons, she still
May gladden in the peace their swords have wrought;
The mimic comet at his signal soars
To invade the upper sphere; and streams of fire
Blood-dyed, shot east and west, speak war, until
Tumultuous founts of flame, erewhile immasked,
Flare triumph to the stars; then with weird art
He bids the skies shed showers of golden rain,
Of wealth pacific proof; or, sheaves of light
Drop their bright grain; token that while the rich
Reap, e'en the poor may glean life's goods; or, roots,
Instant in air, a palm whose glittering cones
Seem culled by hand celestial, fruits of peace,
As peace of victory; street, spire, and dome
With fire-jets gleam, in lines of lengthening light,
Vibrant, by playful gusts chased; soothed in soul
The night-thronged nations thunder their applause.
So he, the war divine of Heaven with earth;
God's conquest o'er the ravenous hosts of ill,
And grace and peace triumphant wrote for man.
Nor bates the book one tittle of the truth,
To smoothe its way to favour with the fearful.
It is not moral standards which the bard
Is called on to inculcate; such pertain
To other ministries; the law of life
His all-comprising province. Yet he errs
Who faithful may be to his higher end,
Unites not both in one symmetric plan,
Lofty and plain and pure as are the skies;
All forms resolving to one element.
All rests with those who read. A work or thought
Is what each makes it to himself, and may
Be full of great dark meanings, like the sea,
With shoals of life rushing; or like the air,
Benighted with the wing of the wild dove,
Sweeping miles broad o'er the far western woods,

With mighty glimpses of the central light—
Or may be, nothing—bodiless, spiritless.

Student. But tell us more minutely.

Festus.

If you choose.

There is a porch, wherefrom is something seen
Of the main dome beyond. Though shadows cross
Each other's path, yet let us go through it.
And lo ! an opening scene in Heaven, wherein
The foredoom of all things, spirit and matter,
Is shewn, and the permission of temptation ;
The angelic worship of the Trinity.
By God's name uttered thrice ; the joys and powers
Of souls o'erblessed, and the sweet offices
Of warden-angel told ; and the complete
Well-fixed necessity and end of all things.
From Heaven we come to earth, and so do souls.
For next succeeds a soft and sunset scene,
Wherein is shown the collapsed, empty state
In which all worldly pleasures leave us ; youth's,
Though natural, fitful, unavailing, struggle
Against a great temptation come unlooked for :
And that to sin is to curse God in deed.
The soul long used to truth still keeps its strength,
Though plunged upon a sudden mid the false ;
As hands, thrust into a dark room, retain
Their sunlent light a season. So with this.
The lines have under meanings ; and the scene
Of self-forgetfulness and indecision
Breaks off, not ends. A starry, stirless night
Follows, which shadows out youth's barren longings
For goodness, greatness, marvels, mysteries.
Whence comes this dream of immortality,
And the resurgent essence ? Let us think !
What mean we by the dead ? The dead have life,
The changed ; and, if they come, it is to show
Their change is for the better. The bait takes.
Man and his foe shake hands upon their bargain.
The youth sets out for joy, and 'neath the care
Of his good enemy, begins his course.
This they begin together, aiding each
The other, and abusing others.

Helen.

I

Was waiting for an eloquential pause

In this mysterious, allegorical,
 Mythical, theological, odd story.
 So now, then, I shall ask myself to sing;
 And granting I agree to my request,
 I think you ought to thank me.

Student.

That we will.

But not just now.

Helen.

Oh! yes now; yes, this moment.

I'm in the humour.

Student.

We are not.

Festus.

Yes, let her!

Helen. What shall I sing?

Festus.

Sing something merry, love.

Helen. I won't: I'll sing the dullest thing I know;
 One of thine own songs.

Student.

What a compliment!

Festus. Sing what thou lik'st, then.

Helen.

No; what thou lik'st.

Student.

Well,

Something about love, and it can't be wrong.

For love the sunny world supplies
 With laughing lips and happy eyes.

Festus. And 'twill be sooner over,

Student.

And so better.

Helen. Like an island in a river,
 Art thou, my love, to me:
 And I journey by thee ever
 With a gentle ecstasie.
 I arise to fall before thee;
 I come to kiss thy feet;
 To adorn thee and adore thee,
 Mine only one! my sweet!

And thy love hath power upon me,
 Like a dream upon a brain;
 For the loveliness which won me,
 With the love, too, doth remain.
 And my life it beautifieth,
 Though love be but a shade,
 Known of only ere it dieth,
 By the darkness it hath made.

Was that addressed to me? Ere more be said,
 Let me advise thee now of some great news.
 Invited to partake art thou with us
 The mysteries of the Truth.

Festus. The friend thou knowest,
Whom thou hast met with me aforetime, now,
Knowing thine ardent longing for the light
Of wisdom, and my sovereign beauty's, here ;
Hath proffered to procure us, without pain
Probational, for proofs are only due
From spirits less advanced, the privilege
Of ancient mysteries practised heretofore
Which, likely, linked together divers faiths.

Helen. Wilt share with us this glory?

Student. Gladly, I.
Art thou initiate?

Helen. Art thou perfect?

Student.	That
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Were scarce an answer, lady of the light!

Festus. Nay, then. To one, wise, chosen, soul-re-
stored.

Nor rite nor rule pre-requisite can be.
Soul that hath once received, as some receive,
With fatal knowledge of futurity,
Faith full-assured, that from Time's crownéd womb,
Whatever comes is kingly, feels thenceforth
Mere secondary knowledge pall. To me
Rite, rule, sign, symbol, all have ceased to fruit.
Who knows the eternal secrets of the stars
Hath touched the quick of all faiths ; knoweth all
Worth knowing ; though true faith all known transcends.
And whoso lives not as the Master lived,
The great Initiate here of life divine,
In the dry wilderness of self-denial :
Beset by passions, wild, and brute-like sins ;
Tempted by dæmons in the form of fame,
Power, beauty, wealth, may be, inordinate ;
Aught that would turn aside the truth-fraught soul.
From its serene procession towards God's throne,
To selfish objects ; and, resisting these,
Been ministered unto by angel hopes,
Winged with the spirit of comfort from high Heaven,
Filling the craving mind with food celestial,
Greater or less than saint and spirit elect,
Hath most or nought of perfect manhood, tried
In God's all-cleansing fires. He, if he fail,

Falls into fatal darkness, and the pit
 Lit only by the light of serpents' eyes ;
 There wandering self-condemned and desolate,
 Till renovative times bid hope return.
 But whoso conquereth, O ! what bliss hath he ;
 All that he once subdued who now enjoys ;
 Proud of his aid, but humble in himself ;
 Lion of God, he all attacks o'ercomes
 Of fascinative fraud, or fiercest force ;
 A proffered throne to steal aside his soul
 Into bye-paths of treachery, and bewray
 The secret truth, supremely sweet, he spurns,
 Whose crown is God ; the Lord of life eterne ;
 The great Perfector of all souls create.
 All souls are born of God and of the faith
 Wherein they are bred and nursed—their mother-faith.
 The King hath many a hundred handmaidens,
 All sharers in His worship, of His love.
 Others may thirst to know more. I all know
 I wish to know. Who, pray, can teach me truths
 More sure, choice, comforting than those are mine,
 Of graduated divinity and the grand
 Development of being ; the humane
 And everlasting judgment of the world ;
 The vast realities which nature types
 All spirit-life pervading ; man, himself,
 The exile of eternity, earth-fouled,
 Like some degraded god debarred the mount
 By the immortal waters of the oath,
 With Heaven's all-pardoning welcome met at last ?

Student. If acceptable—

Helen.

Come !

Student.

Well, now resume.

Festus. Trial alone of ill and folly gives
 Clear proofs of the world's vanities ; but little
 Good comes of sermons, prophecies, or warnings,
 Though from the steps of an old grey market-cross
 The devil is holding forth to the faithless. There
 A social prayer is offered up to God.
 The next scene seems to promise fair ; for sure
 If that there be one scene in life, wherefrom
 Evil is absent, it is pure early love.

Helen. Alas! when beauty pleads the cause of virtue
The chief temptation to embrace it's wanting.

Festus. A man in love sees wonders. But not love
Makes the soul happy: so the youth gets hopeless.

To this comes on a stern and stormy quarrel
'Tween the two foe friends—Youth demanding what
Cannot be; and the other withholding safe

And easy grants. They part and meet as though
Nothing had happened, in the next scene: none
Know how we reconcile ourselves to evil.

Follows a rapid bird's eye view of earth,
A stirring up of the dust of all the nations:
While man and his malevolent friend, the fiend,
As day and night together round the world,
Compass the orb rejoicing in the glow
And universal season of the sun.

Then comes a village feast; a kind of home
To weary wayfarer—where with the world,
We mix in private, talking seriously
Of light things; lightly of some things serious;

A country merry-making, where all speak
According to their sorts, and the occasion.

Deeper than ever lead-line went, behold
We search the rayless central sun within.

We penetrate all mysteries, but are
Unfitted long to dwell in the recess
Of our own nature, and we long for light.

True aspiration riseth from research.

Next by the o'erthrown altar of a fane,
Foundation-shattered, like the ripened heart,
We find ourselves in worship. Let us hope
All, spirit, form, and offering, grateful. Stone,
Untooled, untouched, unless by Nature's hand,
Mound, pyramid, tower, obelisk, fane, spire,
Temple and circular city, to one truth,
Fountain and river and the sun-searched depths
Of all accepting ocean, testify.

In one of Earth's head cities, after this,
We tower-like rise, and with an eminent eye
Glance round society, insatiate;—
The high unknown as yet unrealized.

In less time than the twinkling of a star,
 Insphered in air, the arch-fiend and the youth,
 Like twilight and midnight, discourse and rise.
 Thence to another planet, for the book,
 Stream-like, doth steal the images of stars,
 And trembles at its boldness, where we meet
 The spirit of the first night of temptation ;
 And mix with many of those lofty musings
 Which sow in us the seeds of higher kind,
 And brighter being. Heavenly poesie,
 Which shines among the powers of the mind,
 As that bright star she dwells in, mid the worlds
 Which make the system of the sun, is there too.
 Then to that sacred sphere, the Queen of Heaven,
 Whose shining but still silent prophesy
 Is of those times when all shall be fulfilled ;
 And Time his sceptre and his crown resign,
 After his day's reign, to Eternity.
 But these high things are lost, and drowned, and dimmed,
 Like a blue eye in tears, that trickle from it
 Like angels leaving Heaven on their errands
 Of love, behind them, in the scene succeeding ;—
 A scene of song, and dance, and mirth, and wine.
 And damsels, in whose lily skin the blue
 Veins branch themselves in hidden luxury,
 Hues of the heaven they seem to have vanished from.
 Mere joys ; but saddened and sublimed at close
 By sweet remembrance of immortal ones
 Once loved, aye hallowed. Still, in scenes like this
 Youth lingers longest, drawing out his time
 As a gold-beater does his wire, until
 'Twould reach round earth.

Student.

And be of no use then.

Festus. Blame not the bard for showing this ; but mind
 He wrote of youth as passionate genius,
 Its flights and follies—both its sensuous ends
 And common-places. To behold an eagle
 Batting the sunny ceiling of the world
 With his dark wings, one well might deem his heart
 On heaven ; but, no ! it is fixed on flesh and blood ;
 And soon his talons tell it. Pass we on.

A brief and solemn parley o'er a grave
Follows, in which youth vows to trust in God,
Be the end what it may. A prescient view
Of what is true repentance to the soul,
Spirit-informed, expands : and over all,
The spiritual harmonies of Heaven
By the raised soul are heard ; and God's great rule
To creatures justified. And next we find
Ourselves in Heaven. Even man's deadly life
Can be there, by God's leave. Once brought to God,
The soul's foredoom is set before it brightly,
And Heaven's designs are seen to be brought to bear.
In that bright state shall God's will be our own,
And our will what we will, and faith be choice,
The rule which reconciles all contraries,
Sets free necessity, and sanctifies.
Whereto let both prophetic passed attest,
And self-fulfilling future of all joy.
A lightning revelation of the Heavens,
And what is in them. Let it not be said
He sought his God in the self-slayer's way,
Whose highest aim was but to worship in
All humbleness ; for he was called thereto,
To show the holy God in three scenes, first
And last in Threelihood, and midst in One :
The unity essential, formless, first
Of God the Father, of all means, divine
And creatural, destinator, source and end ;
The great director of the universe,
Who with His finger holloweth out the bed
The stream of time shall flow in ; flow for aye ;—
Although less hard to shape the wide-winged wind
O'er the bright heights of air. He will forgive :
For we, this moment, and all living souls—
All matter, are as much within His presence,
And known through, like a glass film in the sun,
As we can ever be. Another scene
Of natural luxury, and joy and love,
Those secondary orblets of our life,
And satellites of youth's all-glowing sphere.
Deserted for a time, his sacred love
The contest yields against declining faith.

Love needs such delicate diet ; he is like
 The golden-breasted bird, that but on clouds
 Morn-ambered fed, ere rose-breath'd summer dies ;
 Nor can endure the shadow of decay.

Helen. Moonlight and music, and kisses and wine,
 And beauty which must be for rhyme-sake divine ;
 Went it not so, I pray ?

Festus. Through sundry worlds
 The mortal wends, returning, and relates
 To her he loves—and joyously they greet,
 As boat by breeze and billow backed by tide—
 His bright experience of celestial homes ;
 Where spiritual natures, kind and high,
 Light-born, which can divine immortal things,
 Abide embosomed in eternity.
 Something he tells, too, of the friendly fiend,
 Something of ancient ages, infant Earth,
 And all maternal Nature, God inspired ;—
 Secret enclosing secret, like the balls
 Of carved ivory containing each
 One than itself less, than itself one more ;
 And like life's double riddle so involved,
 The sole solution makes the mystery.
 To this succeeds a scene explaining much,
 Of retrospective and prospective cast,
 Between the bard, his beauty, and his friend,
 Regarding soul, and heart, and intellect.
 Our story ties us here to earth again,
 And sea all aged—gray at once with years,
 And green with youth. Now evil is in love ;
 And ever those who are unhappiest have
 Their hearts' desire the oftenest, but in dreams.
 Dreams are mind-clouds, high and unshapen beauties,
 Or but God-shaped, like mountains, which contain
 Much and rich matter ; often not for us,
 But for another. Dreams are rudiments
 Of the great state to come. We dream what is
 About to happen to us.

Helen. What may be
 The dream in this case ?

Festus. It is one of death.

Helen. Of death ! is that all ? Well, I too have had

What every one hath once, at least, in life—
 A vision of the region of the dead ;
 It was the land of shadows : yea, the land
 Itself was but a shadow ; and the race
 Which seemed therein were voices, forms of forms,
 And echoes of themselves. And there was nought
 Of substance seemed, save one thing in the midst,
 A great red sepulchre—a granite grave ;
 And at the bottom lay a skeleton,
 From whose decaying jaws the shades were born ;
 Making its only sign of life, its dying
 Continually. Some were bright, some dark.
 Those that were bright went upwards Heavenly.
 They which were dark grew darker, and remained.
 A land of change, yet did the half things nothing
 That I could see ; but passéd stilly on,
 Taking no note of other, mate or child ;
 For all had lost their love when they put off
 The beauty of the body. And as I
 Looked on, the grave before me backed away ;
 And I began to dream it was a dream ;
 And I rushed after it : when the earth quaked,
 Opened and shut, like the eye of one in fits ;
 It shut to with a shout. The grave was gone.
 And in the stead there stood a gleed-like throne,
 Which all the shadows shook to see, and swooned ;
 For fiends were standing, loaded with long chains,
 The links whereof were fire, waiting the word
 To bind and cast the shadows into hell ;
 For Death the second sat upon that throne,
 Which set on fire the air not to be breathed.
 And as he lifted up his arm to speak,
 Fear preyed upon all souls, like fire on paper ;
 And mine among the rest, and I awoke.

Student. By Hades 'twas most awful. But I too
 Have dreamed strange things beyond the mind's clear
 grasp ;

Beyond life's limits and the term of time,
 And star-lamped palace of eternal Night.
 I dreamed time's system ended, like a day
 Of celebrant victory rounded with a roar
 Of jubilant thunder, which subsides at last

Making our way among the wheeling worlds,
Millions of suns, half infinite each; and space
For ever shone into, for ever dark,
As God is, to and by created mind;
Upheld by the companion spirit. There,
The nature of the all in one, and whence
Evil; the fixed impossibility
Of creatures' perfectness, until made one
With God; and the necessity of ill,
As yet, are things all touched upon and proven.
The next scene shows us hell, in the mad mock
Of mortal revelry—the quelling truth
That all life's sinful follies run to hell;
That lies, debauches, murders never die,
But live in hell for ever: make, are hell.
And truth is there too. Hell is its own moral.
Perdition certain to the unrepentant;
Redemption on a like scale with creation;
And all creation needing it and having.
The mundane mysteries next are shadowy limned,
And fatal end of truth-search, prompted sole
By thirst of curious lore, this teaching, truth
Lies more in preparation fit for truth
Than aught beside. Death's harvest-home begins.
The first fruits, let us hope, are holy made.
The bard foretels; and lo! it comes to pass.
Then comes a scene of passion, brought about
By the bad spirit's means for his own ends,
Whom we know not when come, so dark we grow;
Making it but a blind for further ill.
The ultimate force of evil tends to good,
Albeit unconsciously the medium works;
As some volcano scattering death and woe,
Lifts from earth's heart the aggregated ire
Of ages; ill but relatively lives;
Good only, as identical with God,
Hath essence and endurance absolute.
And then a rest in light, as though 'tween earth
And Heaven there were a mediate spirit-point;
A bright effect original of God,
Enlightening all ways inwardly and around;
Whence is detected in the following scene,

Laid by the lonely sea-shore, as before,
Where the great waves come in frothed, like a horse
Put to his heart-burst speed, sobbing up hill,
How Evil works his victim's death, to clear
His way, and keep his name of murderer ;
As he in other parts makes good his titles,
Deceiver, liar, tempter, and accuser ;
Hater of man, and, most of all, of God.
In the next scene, we picture back our life ;
Contrasting the pure joys of earlier years,
With the unsatedness of current sin ;
And the sad sense that love's own heart turns sick,
Like a bad pearl ; but that the feeling still
Is adamant, though the splendid thing
Whereon it writes its record, is of all
Frailest ; and though earth shows to good and bad,
The same blind kindness, beautiful to see,
Wherewith our lovely mother loveth us,
The world in vain unbosometh her beauty,
We have no list to live : for things may be
Corrupted into beauty : and that love,
Where all the passions blend, as hues in white,
Tires at the last, as day would, if all day
And no night. So despair of heart increases :
The last lure—power—is proffered, taken. All
Hangs on the last desire whatever it be.
What follows is of earth, and setteth forth
God's mercy, and the mystery of sin ;
And a great gathering of the worlds round God,
Told by the youth to his truthful, trustful, love ;
Who, light and lowly as a glow-worm, sheds
Her luminous beauty round her ; or like a rose
Sweet smelling dew upon the ground it grows on.
How sweet is reconciled love ; how dear
Repentance ; grace forgiving, how divine !
Virtue, though trampled on, despised, ignored,
Is precious still, still pure ; as in that isle,
Vastest of isles, to Asian continent
Rich counterpoise, where over mount and plain
Of virgin gold, the senseless salvage tramped
For ages, nor its charms nor value knew.
The pure know evil by repulsion, both

From surface and from centre ; the impure,
By likeness and attraction to themselves.
There is instinctive wisdom and acquired.
A scene of prescient solitude and soul
Commune with Heaven, repentance, prayer, faith,
Which are all things inspired alone of God,
Who signifies salvation, follows this.
In the next scene, we feel the end draw nigh.
Nor power nor knowledge, love nor pleasure make
The Heaven-affianced spirit false to God.
When God's ends and man's motives coincide,
Though doubt for long may triumph, and despair
Leave the soul blind-fold on the edge of hell,
Success is certain, and is sanctified.
A change is wrought on earth as great as that
In its first ages, when the elements
Less gross and palpable than air, were changed
To mountainous and adamant mass,
Now 'neath the feet of nations ;—figuring forth
The fateful mind which is to govern all,
Controlling the great evil ; for it is mind -
Which shall rule and be ruled, and not the body,
In the last age of human sway on earth ;
Ambition, ruined by its own success ;
Aims lost, power useless ; love, pure love, the last
Of mortal things that nestles in the heart.
There is a love which acts to death, and through death ;
And may come white, and bright, and pure, like paper,
From refuse, or from clearest things at first ;
It is beyond the accidents of life ;
For things we make no compt of have in them
The seeds of life, use, beauty, like the cores
Of apples that we fling away. Nought now
Is left but trust in God, who tries the heart
And saves it, at the last, from its own ruin ;
The parting spirit fluttering like a flag,
Half from its earthly staff. The death-change comes.
Death is another life. We bow our heads
At going out, we think, and enter straight
Another golden chamber of the king's,
Larger than this we leave, and lovelier.
And then in shadowy glimpses, disconnect,

The story, flowerlike, closes thus its leaves.
The will of God is all in all. He makes,
Destroys, remakes, for His own pleasure, all.
After inferior nature is subdued,
The evil is confined. All elements
Conglobe themselves from chaos, purified.
Angels and all the virtues of the skies
Mingle with men, each orb a palace now
Of the world blessing spirit, and narrate
The holy legends of angelic spheres.
To speak transpiciously of things Divine
Pertaineth not to nature. Who would prove
Divinity by works, works miracles ;
By words, speaks mysteries, mixed with brightest truths.
All revelation is a mystery.
The rebegotten world is born again.
The body and the soul cease ; spirit lives :
And gloriously falsified are all
Earth's caverned prophecies of bodyhood.
Spirits rise up and rule and link with Heaven ;
The soul state is searched into ; dormant Death,
Evil, and all the dark gods of the heart,
And the idolatrous passions, ruined, chained,
And worshipless, are seen ; and there, the Word
Heard and obeyed ;—next comes the truth divine,
Redintegrative ;—Evil's last and worst
Endeavour vanquished by Almighty good.
The scene penultimate shews earth's final doom ;
The last, the highest and all-embracing Heavens,
Souls' judgment and salvation of the youth ;
Nor only man's, but all spirits ; God, at last,
Drawing His thousand folded veil of light,
Shews to the world astound and jubilant,
As that from first fore-fixed, and justifies ;
The universe expurgated of evil,
And hell for aye abolished ; all create,
Redeemed, their God all love, themselves all bliss.
Heaven is the birth of spirit, and the world
Passed, embryotic only in its kind.
We are but here the multiples of men,
Like seeds of thought and passing words of chance ;
Which buried in the mind for days and nights,

Live, to rerise and fructify in dreams
Of infinite significance and power.
Yea the round world itself shall barely seem
A passing reminiscence to the soul,
Like a base thought across a cloudless prayer,
Which ruffles not annuls it ; and the great
Artist, whose pictures live, expunges earth,
And on his easel dawns another Heaven.
We may say that the sun is dead and gone
For ever ; and may swear he will rise no more ;
The skies may put on mourning for their god ;
And earth heap ashes on her head : but who
Shall keep the sun back, when he thinks to rise ?
Where is the chain shall bind him ? Where the cell
Shall hold him ? Hell he would burn down to embers
And would lift up the world with a lever of light,
Out of his way ; yet, know ye, 'twere thrice less
To do thrice this, than keep the soul from God.
O'er earth, and cloud, and sky, and star, and Heaven,
It dwells with God, uprisen as a prayer.
Now, the religion of the book is this,
Followed out from the book God writ of old.
All creatures being faulty by their nature,
And by God made all liable to sin,
God only could atone—and unto none
Except Himself—for universal sin.
It is thus that God did sacrifice to God,
Himself unto Himself, in the great way
Of Triune mystery. His death, as man,
Was real as our own ; and as, except
In the destruction of all life, there could
Be no atonement for its sin, while life
Doth necessarily result from God,
As thought and outward action from ourselves,
So the atonement must be to and by Him ;
Which makes it justice equally with love ;
For all His powers and attributes are equal,
And must make one in any act of His ;
And every act of God is infinite.
He acts through all in all ; the truth we know,
He doth Himself inbreathe ; the ill we do,
He hath atoned for ; and the Scriptures shew
That God doth suffer for the sins of those

Whom He hath made, that are liable to sin.
 In all of us He hath His agony;
 We are the cross, and death of God, and grave.
 Him love then all the more, and worship Him
 Who lived and died, and rose from death for us,
 And is and reigns for ever God in all.
 Let each man think himself an act of God,
 His mind a thought, his life a breath of God;
 And let each try, by great thoughts and good deeds,
 To shew the most of Heaven he hath in him.
 Many who read the word of life, much doubt
 Whether salvation be of grace, or faith,
 Election, or repentance, or good works,
 Or God's high will: reconcile all of them.
 Each of the persons of the Triune God
 Hath had His dispensation, hath it now;
 The Father by His prophets, and the Son
 In His own days, by His own deeds: and now
 The Spirit, by the ministry of Christ;
 And thus by law, by gospel, and by grace,
 The scheme of God's salvation is complete.
 Salvation, then, is God-like, threefold; so
 That under one or other, all may come:
 By will of God alone, by faith in Christ,
 And by repentance, and good works, and grace.
 So there is one salvation of the Father,
 One of the Son, another of the Spirit;
 Each, the salvation of the Three in One.
 The mortal in this lay is saved of will,
 In manner as this hymn unfolds, which hath
 Just warrant for every word from God's.

O God! Thou wondrous One in Three,
 As mortals must Thee deem;
 Thou only canst be said to be,
 We but at best to seem.
 For thou dost save, and Thou may'st slay,
 Canst make a mortal soul
 In Thee eternal; in a day
 Will bring to nought the whole.

Thou hardenest, and Thou openest hearts,
 As in Thy Word is shown;
 Thou savest and destroyest parts,
 By Thy right will alone.

Let down Thy grace then, Lord ! on all
 Whom thou wilt save to live ;
 Oh ! if they stumble, stop their fall !
 Oh ! if they fall, forgive !

They are forgiven from the first,
 They are predestined Thine ;
 And though in sin they were the worst,
 In Thee they are divine.
 They are, and were, and will be, Lord !
 In one, in Heaven, in Thee ;
 Yea with the Spirit, and the Word,
 One God in Trinity.

These principles and doctrines pending not
 Upon the action of the poem here,
 But over and above it, influencing
 Nevertheless the story, as the course
 Of stars enwoven with our system, earth,
 Vary the view of this life's hemisphere,
 And mingle it more palpably with Heaven,
 And with its changeless, ceaseless, boundless God.
 It is thus that by creating to and from
 Eternity, and multiplying ever
 His own one Being through the universe,
 He doth eternize happiness, and make
 Good infinite by making all in Him.
 There is but one great right and good ; and ill
 And wrong are shades thereof, not substances.
 Nothing can be antagonist to God.
 The spirit speaks of God in Heaven's own tongue,
 No mystery to those who love, but learned
 As is our mother tongue, from Him, the parent ;
 By whom created, fashioned, flesh, and spirit,
 All forms and feelings of all kinds of beauty
 Are burned into our heart-clay, pattern-like.
 Much too is writ, elsewhere and here, not yet
 Made clear, nor can be till earth come of age ;
 Like the unfinished rudiments of light
 Which gather time by time into a star.
 Thus have I shown the meaning of the book,
 And the most truthful likeness of a mind,
 Which hath as yet been limned ; the mind of youth
 In strength and failings, in its overcomings,
 And in its short comings ; the kingly ends,

The universalizing heart of youth ;
 Its love of power, heed not how had, although
 With surety of self-ruin at the end.

Every thing urged against it proves its truth
 And faithfulness to nature, Some cried out
 'Twas inconsistent ; so 'twas meant to be.
 Such is the very stamp of youth and nature ;
 And the continual losing sight of its aims,
 And the desertion of its most expressed,
 And dearest rules and objects, this is youth.

Student. I look on life as keeping me from God,
 Stars, Heaven, and angels' bosoms. I lay ill ;
 And the dark, hot blood throbbing through and through
 me.

They bled me and I swooned ; and as I died,
 Or seemed to die, a soft, sweet sadness fell
 With a voluptuous weakness, on my soul,
 That made me feel all happy. But my heart
 Would live, and rose, and wrestled with the soul,
 Which stretched its wings and strained its strength in vain,
 Twining around it as a snake an eagle.

Mine eyes unclosed again, and I looked up,
 And saw the sweet blue twilight, and one star,
 One only star in Heaven ; and then I wished
 That I had died and gone to it ; and straight
 Was glad I lived to love life once again.
 And so our souls turn round upon themselves,
 Like orbs upon their axles : what was night
 Is day ; what day, night. God will guide us on,
 Body and soul, through life and death, to judgment.

Festus. Earth hath her deserts mixed with fruitful
 plains ;

The word of God is barren in some parts ;
 A rose is not all flower, but hath much
 Which is of lower beauty, yet like needful ;
 And he who in great makings doth like these,
 Doth only that which is most natural.
 Like life too it is boundlessly unequal,
 Now soaring, and now grovelling : at one time
 All harmony, and then again all harshness,
 With an ever-changing style of thought and speech.
 The work is still consistent with itself ;

As one part often bears upon another,
Lifting it to the light, where most it needs.
The thoughts we have of men are bold as men;
Our thoughts of God are thin and fleet as ghosts;
But it was not his meaning to draw men,
Such as he heard they were in the old world,
And sometimes mixed with; he blessed God he knew
But little of the world, that little good;
While some sighed out that little was its all.
So for the persons and the scenes he drew,
Oft in a dim and dreamy imagery
Shapen, half-shapen, mis-shapen, unshapen,
They are the shadowy creatures which youth dreams
Live in the world embodied, but are not,
Save in the mind's, which is the mightier one.
They are the names of things which we believe in,
Ideas not embodied, alas, not!
And the sad fate which divers of those meet
Whom the youth loves and quits, from this to that
Converted, as by faith, means nought so ill
As the betrayer's sin, salvationless
Almost: it is but desertion, not betrayal;
And forced on him according to a promise
Made at the first unto him, and to be
Wrought out in brief time; and the same fair souls,
Saved, stand for our desires made pure in Heaven.
Let us work out our natures; we can do
No wrong in them; they are divine, eterne.
I follow my attraction, and obey
Nature, as earth does, circling round her source
Of life and light, and keeping true in Heaven,
Though not perfect in round, which nothing is.
For earth is midway between love and war;
And war hath played his part in poesie.
'Twas the heart-book of love, well nigh all grief;
For the heart leaves its likeness best in that
O'erwhelming sorrow which burns up and buries,
Like to the eloquent impression left
In lava, of Pompeian maiden's bosom.
All passions, and all pleasures, and all powers
Of man's heart, are brought in, and mind and frame.
He made this work the business of his life,

It was his mission ; and was laid on him.
 He was a labourer on the ways of God,
 And had his hire in peace and power to work.
 He wrote it not in the contempt of rule,
 And not in hate ; but in the self-made rule
 That there was none to him, but to himself
 He was his sole rule, and had right to be.
 The faults are faults of nature, and prove art
 Man's nature, that a thing of art, like it,
 Should be so pure in kind.

Helen. I do believe
 The world is a forged thing, and hath not got
 The die of God upon it. It will not pass
 In Heaven, I tell ye.

Student. How shouldst thou know ought
 Of Heaven, unless by contrast ?

Festus. Pray now cease ;
 Ye two are jarring ever, though as with
 The bickering beauty of two swords, whose strife
 Though deadly, maketh music, I could listen ;
 Did not each stab, whichever way, pain me.

Helen. Oh, I could stand and rend myself with
 rage,
 To think I am so weak, that all are so ;
 Mere minims in the music made from us ;
 While I would be a hand to sweep from end
 To end, from infinite to infinite,
 The world's great chord. The beautiful of old
 Had but to say some god had been with them ;
 And their worst fault to their best deed was hallowed.
 That was to live. Could we uproot the passed,
 Which grows and throws its chilling shade o'er us,
 Lengthening every hour and darkening it :
 Or could we plant the future where we would,
 And make it flourish, that, too, were to live.
 But it is not more true that what is, is,
 Than that what is not, is not. It is enough
 To bear the ever present, as we do.
 The city of the passed is laid in ruins ;
 Its echo-echoing walls at a whisper fall :
 The coming is not yet built ; nor as yet
 Its deep foundations laid ; but seems, at once,

Like the air city goodly and well watered,
Which the dry wind doth dream of on the sands,
Where he dies away with his wanderings :
While we enjoy the hope thereof, and perish ;
Not seeing that the desert present is
Our end.

Festus. The brightest natures oft have darkest
End, as fire smoke.

Student. I will read the book in the hope
Of learning somewhat from it.

Festus. Thou mayest learn
A hearty thanksgiving for blessings here,
And proud prediction of a state to come,
Of love, and life, and power unlimited ;
And uttered in a sound and homely tongue,
Fit to be used by all who think while speaking ;
With here and there some old, hard, uncouth words,
Which have withal a quaint and meaning richness,
As stones make more the power of the soil.
The works of genius are first criticised ;
Then studied ; next expounded ; last adored.
The world hath said its say for and against :
And after praise and blame cometh the truth.
Living men look on all who live askance.
Were he a cold grey ghost, he would have honour ;
And though as man he must have mixed with men,
Yet the true bard doth make himself ghost-like ;
He lives apart from men ; he wakes and walks
By nights ; he puts himself into the world
Above him ; and he is what but few see.
He knows, too, to the old hid treasure, truth :
And the world wonders, shortly, how some one
Hath come so rich of soul ; it little dreams
Of the poor ghost that made him. Yet he comes
To none save of his own blood ; and lets pass
Many a generation till his like
Turns up ; moreover, this same genius
Comes, ghost-like, to those only who are lonely
In life and in desire ; never to crowds :
And it can make its way through every thing,
And is never happy till it tells its secret ;
But pale and pressed down with the inward weight

Of unborn works, it sickens nigh to death,
Often ; but who like happy at a birth ?

Student. Say what a poet ought to do and be.

Festus. Though it may scarce become me, knowing little,
Yet what I have thought out upon that theme,
And deem true, I will tell thee.

Helen. Now I know
You two will talk of nothing else all night ;
So I will to my music. Sweet ! I come.
Art thou not glad to see me ? . What a time
Since I have touched thine eloquent white fingers.
Hast thou forgot me ? Mind, now ! Knowest thou not
My greeting ? Ah ! I love thee. Talk away !
Never mind me ; I shall not you.

Student. Agreed !

Helen. By the sweet muse of music, I could swear
I do believe it smiles upon me ; see it
Full of unuttered music, like a bird ;
Rich in invisible treasures, like a bud
Of unborn sweets, and thick about the heart
With ripe and rosy beauty—full to trembling.
I love it like a sister. Hark !—its tones ;
They melt the soul within one like a sword,
Albeit sheathed, by lightning. Talk to me,
Lovely one ! Answer me, thou beauty !

Student. Hear her !

Helen. What said ye, sing again ? Your kindness well
Merits the raptures you are doomed to enjoy.

The rose is weeping for her love,
The Nightingale ;
And he is flying fast above,
To her he will not fail.
Already golden eve appears,
He wings his way along ;
Ah ! look, he comes to kiss her tears,
And soothe her with his song.
The moon in pearly light may steep
The still blue air ;
The rose hath ceased to droop and weep,
For lo ! her love is there.
He sings to her, and o'er the trees
She hears his sweet notes swim ;
The world may weary ; she but sees
Her love, and hears but him.

Festus. So to the flower of perfect life the world
Sings the eternal spirit; drinks its divine
Perfume, and comforts it with fluttering wings.

Student. That roses weep is a botanic fact;
A zoologic truth, that birds woo flowers.

Helen. 'Tween truth and fact a world wide difference
lies;

Earth is a fact, but Heaven, O Heaven! is truth.

Festus. Experience and imagination are
Mother and sire of song—the harp and hand.
The poet in his work reflects his soul,
As some lone nymph, beside a woodland well,
Whose clear white limbs, like animated light,
Make glad the heart and sanctify the sight,
The soft and shadowy miracle of her form.
The bard's aim is to give us thoughts: his art
Lieth in giving them as bright as may be.
And even when their looks are earthy, still
If opened, like geoids, they may be found
Full of all sparkling, sparry loveliness.
They should be wrought, not cast; like tempered steel,
Burned and cooled, burned again, and cooled again.
A thought is like a ray of light—complex
In nature, simple only in effect.
Words are the motes of thought, and nothing more.
Words are like sea-shells on the shore; they shew
Where the mind ends, and not how far it has been.
Let every thought, too, soldier-like, be stripped,
And roughly looked over. The dress of words,
Like to the Roman girl's enticing garb,
Should let the play of limb be seen through it,
And the round rising form. A mist of words,
Like halos round the moon, though they enlarge
The seeming size of thoughts, make the light less
Doubly. It is the thought writ down we want,
Not its effect—not likenesses of likenesses.
And such descriptions are not, more than gloves
Instead of hands to shake, enough for us.
As in the good the fair; simplicity
Is nature's first step and the last of art.

Student. But is the power—is poesie inborn,
Or is it to be gained by art or toil?

Festus. It is underived, except from God ; but where Strongest, asks most of human care and aid.
 As lauds attract the largesses of Heaven,
 As gifts God's bounties, purity His saints,
 So genius inspiration ; like to like.
 As when, in planning some steel-rutted road,
 The deep-eyed engineer his level lays
 Inscrutable ; and anon, the hills with men,
 Brood of his brain swarm ; black, unbottomed moss
 And willowy dale with mattock gleam and axe ;
 Or rock-hills, cleft, as with a giant's club,
 Groan loud ; but stealthily, and reach on reach,
 The mighty work elongating itself,
 Glides dragon-like, nor swerves, till o'er the sea,
 Victor by hill and chasm, broad stream and plain,
 Cloud-crested its head towers ;—so his primal plan
 Conceived for others good, the bard, made wise
 By grief's infallible instinct, knew must grow
 And grow, in gradual grandeur, till it ranked
 With headworks of all nations ; and received
 The firm accost of manhood, calm but kind.
 Great bards toil much and most ; but most at first ;
 Ere they can learn to concentrate the soul
 For hours upon a thought to carry it.

Student. Why I have sat for hours and never moved,
 Saving my hands, clock-like, in writing round
 Day after day of thought, and lapse of life.

Festus. Many make books, few poems, which may do
 Well for their gains, but they do nought for truth,
 Nor man, true bard's main aim. Perish the books,
 But the creations live. Some steal a thought,
 And clip it round the edge, and challenge him
 Whose 'twas to swear to it. To serve things thus
 Is as foul witches to cut up old moons
 Into new stars. Some never rise above
 A pretty fault, like faulty dahlias ;
 And of whose best things it is kindly said,
 The thought is fair ; but, to be perfect, wants
 A little heightening, like a pretty face
 With a low forehead. Do thou more than such,
 Or else do nothing. And in poetry,
 There is a poet-worship, one of other,

Which is idolatry ; and not the true
 Love service of the soul to God, which hath
 Alone of His inbreathing, and is rendered
 Unto Him, from the first, without man's mean,
 By those whom He makes worthy of His worship ;
 Who kneel at once to Him, and at no shrine,
 Save in the world's wide ear, do they confess them
 Of faults which are all truths ; and thorough which,
 As the world says them over to itself,
 He heareth and absolveth : for the bard
 Speaks but what all feel more or less within
 The heart's heart ; and the sin confessed is done
 Away with and for ever. They confess
 To God, the Almighty Poet of the world.
 And they to whom it is given to believe,
 An individual life with Him enjoy,
 Uplifted o'er the vast and markless mass ;
 Yet not into a sphere of selfish thought,
 But of innate and infinite commune
 With all creation ; for, as distance rules,
 Behold the stars are suns, the sun a star :
 So they who near God boundless hold His love ;
 Who far off lie, misdoubt it almost nought.
 And I who hold the clear and flawless faith,
 Ancient and universal in the spheres,
 Know earth was ta'en out of the side of Heaven,
 And all their starry seed made blessed for aye.
 It is therefore I am joyful. In the far
 To be, our heirdom glitters.

Student.

What of style ?

Festus. There is no style is good but nature's style.
 And the great ancients' writings, beside ours,
 Look like illuminated manuscripts
 Before plain press print ; all had different minds,
 And followed only their own bents : for this
 Nor copied that, nor that the other ; each
 Is finished in his writing, each is best
 For his own mind, and that it was upon ;
 And all have lived, are living, and shall live ;
 But these have died, are dying, and shall die ;
 Yea, copyists shall die, spark out and out.
 Minds which combine and make alone can tell

The bearings and the workings of all things
In and upon each other. All the parts
Of nature meet and fit : wit, wisdom, worth,
Goodness and greatness ; to sublimity
Beauty arises, like a planet world,
Labouring slowly, seemingly, up Heaven ;
But with an infinite pace to some immortal eyes.
And he who means to be a great bard, must
Measure himself against pure mind ; and fling
His soul into a stream of thought, as will
A swimmer hurl himself into the water.
But never swimmer on the stream, nor bird
On wind, feels half so strong, or swift, or glad,
As bard borne high on his mind above himself ;
As though he should begin a lay like this,
Where spiritual element is all ;
Thought chafing thought, as bough bough, till all burn
Like the star-written prophecies of Heaven.
The shattered shadow of eternity
Upon the troubled world, even as the sun
Shows brokenly on wavy waters, time ;
All time is but a second to the dead.
The smoke of the great burning of the world
Had trailed across the skies for many an age,
And was fast wearing into air away,
When a saint stood before the throne, and cried—
Blesséd be Thou, Lord God of all the worlds
That have been, and that are, and are to be !
For Thy destruction, is like infinite
With Thy creation, just and wise in both :
Give me a world ; and God said, Be it so :
And the world was : and then go on to shew
How this new orb was made, and where it shone ;
Who ruled, abode, worshipped, and loved therein ;
Their natures, duties, hopes : let it be pure,
Wise, holy, beautiful ; if not to be
Without it made so by constraint of God—
Kindly forced good : we have had enough of sin
And folly here to wish for and love change.
Let him shew God as going thither mildly,
Father-like, blessing all and cursing none ;
And that there never will be need for them,

That He shall come in glory new to Himself,
 With light to which the lightning shall be shadow,
 And the sun sadness ; borne upon a car
 With wheels of burning worlds, within whose rims
 Whole hells burn, and beneath whose course the stars
 Dry up like dew-drops. But of this enough ;
 I mean that he must weigh himself as he
 Will be weighed after by posterity ;
 After us all are critics, to a man.
 Write to the mind and heart, and let the car
 Glean after what it can. The voice of great
 Or graceful thoughts is sweeter far than all
 Word-music ; and great thoughts, like great deeds, need
 No trumpet. Never be in haste in writing.
 Let that thou utterest be of nature's flow,
 Not art's ; a fountain's, not a pump's. But once
 Begun, work thou all things into thy work ;
 And set thyself about it, as the sea
 About earth, lashing at it day and night.
 And leave the stamp of thine own soul in it
 As thorough as the fossil flower in clay.
 The theme shall start and struggle in thy breast,
 Like to a spirit in its tomb at rising,
 Rending the stones, and crying, Resurrection !

Student. What theme remains ?

Festus. Thyself, thy race, thy love ;
 The faithless and the full of faith in God ;
 Thy race's destiny, thy sacred love.
 Every believer is God's miracle.
 Nothing will stand whose staple is not love ;
 The love of God, or man, or lovely woman ;
 The first is scarcely touched, the next scarce felt,
 The third is desecrated ; lift it up ;
 Redeem it, hallow it ; blend the three in one
 Great holy work. It shall be read in Heaven
 By all the saved of sinners of all time.
 Preachers shall point to it, and tell their wards
 It is a handful of eternal truth ;
 Make ye a heartful of it : men shall will
 That it be buried with them in their hands :
 The young, the gay, the innocent, the brave,

The fair, with soul and body both all love,
 Shall run to it with joy ; and the old man
 Still hearty in decline, whose happy life
 Hath blossomed downwards, like the purple bell-flower,
 Closing the book, shall utter lowly—
 Death, thou art infinite, it is life is little.
 Believe thou art inspired, and thou art.
 Look at the bard and others ; never heed
 The petty hints of envy. If a fault
 It be in bard, to deem himself inspired,
 It is one which hath had many followers
 Before him. He is wont to make, unite,
 Believe ; the world to part, and doubt, and narrow.
 That he believes, he utters. What the world
 Utters, it trusts not. But the time may come
 When all, along with those who seek to raise
 Men's minds, and have enough of pain, without
 Suffering from envy, may be God-inspired
 To utter truth, and feel like love for men.
 Poets are henceforth the world's teachers. Still
 The world is all in sects, which makes one loathe it.

Student. The men of mind are mountains, and their
 heads
 Are sunned long ere the rest of earth. I would
 Be one such.

Festus. It is well. Burn to be great.
 Each mountain stands inspired as touching Heaven.
 Pay not thy praise to lofty things alone
 The plains are everlasting as the hills.
 The bard cannot have two pursuits : aught else
 Comes on the mind with the like shock as though
 Two worlds had gone to war, and met in air.
 Hope never greed from poesie ; as well
 Search for the fairy gold at the rainbow's foot.
 And now that thou hast heard thus much from one
 Not wont to seek, nor give, nor take advice,
 Remember, whatsoe'er thou art as man,
 Suffer the world, entreat it and forgive.
 They who forgive most shall be most forgiven.
 Dear Helen, I will tell thee what I love
 Next to thee—poesie.

Helen. Can any thing
Be even second to me in thy love ?
Doth it not distance all things ?

Festus. To say sooth,
I once loved many things ere I met with thee,
My one blue break of beauty in the clouds ;
Bending thyself to me as Heaven to earth.

Helen. My love is like the moon, seems now to
grow,
And now to lessen ; but it is only so
Because thou canst not see it all at once.
It knows nor day, nor morrow, like the sun :
Unchangeable as space, it still shall be
When yon bright suns, which are themselves but sands
In the great glass of Time, shall be run out.

Festus. Man is but half man without woman ; and
As do idolators their heavenless gods,
We deify the things which we adore.

Helen. Our life is comely as a whole ; nay, more ;
Like rich brown ringlets, with odd hairs all gold.
We women have four seasons, like the year.
Our spring is in our lightsome girlish days,
When the heart laughs within us for sheer joy ;
Ere yet we know what love is, or the ill
Of being loved by those whom we love not.
Summer is when we love and are beloved,
And seems short ; from its very splendour seems
To pass the quickest ; crowned with flowers it flies.
Autumn, when some young thing with tiny hands,
And rosy cheeks, and flossy tendrilled locks,
Is wantoning about us day and night.
And winter is when these we love have perished ;
For the heart ices then. And the next spring
Is in another world, if one there be.
Some miss one season, some another ; this
Shall have them early, and that late ; and yet
The year wear round with all as best it may.
There is no rule for it ; but in the main
It is as I have said.

Festus. My life with thee
Is like a song, and the sweet music thou,
Which doth accompany it.

Student. Say, did thy friend
Write aught beside the work thou tell'st of?

Festus. Nothing.
After that, like the burning peak, he fell
Into himself, and was missing ever after.

Student. If not a secret, pray who was he?

Festus. I.

SCENE—*Garden and Bower by the Sea.*

LUCIFER and ELISSA : FESTUS.

Lucifer. Night comes, world-jewelled, as my bride
should be.

The stars rush forth in myriads as to wage
War with the lines of Darkness; and the moon,
Pale ghost of Light, comes haunting the cold earth
After the sun's red sea-death—quietless.
Immortal Night! I love thee. Thou and I
Are of one seed—the eldest blood of God.
He makes; we mar together all things—all
But our own selves. Love makes thee cold and tremble,
And me all fire. Do off that starry robe;
Catch me up to thee. Let us love, and die,
And weld our souls together, Night! But here
Cometh mine earthly. I in mine own toils
Have got entangled. Her high-natured soul
Takes seriously all. But to me no end,
In show or earnest, save the end of all,
Remains. To that end all things are mere means.
This beauteous dame shall duly dazzle him
Whose fall I care for,—for I think not much
Of final perseverance. And their fates
Blent, if the threads prove pliable enough,
This way, or that, by suffering or by sin,
Or patent power, sublimed in secrecy,
The world's works running gently down, no check
Will, likely, mar the smooth decline I mean.
All things have so far answered well. At last
Earth shows in travail of an unborn king
The imperial infant, he; and sooner now
Than he, or any, knows, man's mightiest choice

Is being destined. Slowly, solemnly,
As riseth from the sea the sacred moon,
Stately and still, she grows upon the night.
She sees me not. Ere yet she comes is time
To rectify my spirit to its just points
Above, around. How is it that now I thrill
More deeply 'neath her eye-glance than the gaze
Of spirit or angel? Can this negative
Eternal be subdued by things of time?
And paltriest affirmations of mere power,
If by Him guided, bear the brunt of worlds?
As still, when set the sun, in summer's tide,
Earth feels, though faintly, his presence; and the Night
Hath never total dark; but round her head
In starry silence, Light invisible feels
Mysteriously his blind way; so, I now
Oppressed with what seems coming, as one doomed
With day-dawn which to all beside brings life,
To him death only. It is Elissa! Welcome!—

Elissa. Is't not a lovely, nay, a heavenly eve?

Lucifer. Thy presence only makes it so to me.
The moments thou art with me are like stars
Peering through my dark life.

Elissa. Nay, speak not so,
Or I shall weep, and thou wilt turn away
From woman's tears: yet are they woman's wealth.

Lucifer. Then keep thy treasures, lady! I would not have
The world, if prized at one sad tear of thine.
One tear of beauty can outweigh a world
Even of sin and sorrow, heavy as this;
But beauty cannot sin, and should not weep,
For she is mortal. Oh! let deathless things
Alone weep. Why should aught that dies be sad?

Elissa. The noble mind is oft too generous,
And, by protecting, weakens lesser one;
And tears must come of feeling, though they quench
As oft the light which love lit in the eye.

Lucifer. And thy love ever hangs about my heart
Like the pure pearl-wreath which enrings thy brow.
I meant not to be mournful. Tell me, now,
How hast thou passed the hours since last we met?

Elissa. I have stayed the livelong day within this bower;

It was here that thou didst promise me to come—
 Watching from wanton morn to repentant eve,
 The self-same roses ope and close; untired,
 Listening the same birds' first and latest songs.
 And still thou camest not. To the 'mind which waits
 Upon one hour, the others are but slaves.
 The week hath but one day—the day one hour—
 That hour of the heart—that lord of time.

Lucifer. Sweet one! I raced with light and passed the
 laggard

To meet thee—or, I mean I could have done—
 Yea, have outsped the very dart of Death—
 So much I sought; and were I living light
 From God, with leave to range the world, and choose
 Another brow than His whereon to beam—
 To mark what even an angel could but covet—
 A something lovelier than Heaven's loveliness—
 To thee I straight would dart, unheeding all
 The lives of other worlds, even those who name
 Themselves thy kind; for oft my mind o'ersoars
 The stars; and, pondering upon what may be
 Of their chief lording natures, man's seems worst—
 The darkest, meanest, which, through all these worlds,
 Drags what is deathless, may be, down to dust.

Elissa. Speak not so bitterly of human kind;
 I know that thou dost love it. Hast not heard
 Of those great spirits, who the greater grow
 The better we are able them to prize?
 Great minds can never cease; yet have they not
 A separate estate of deathlessness:
 The future is a remnant of their life:
 Our time is part of theirs, not theirs of ours;
 They know the thoughts of ages long before.
 It is not the weak mind feels the great mind's might;
 None but the great can test it. Does the oak
 Or reed feel the strong storm most? Oh, unsay
 What thou hast said of man; nor deem me wrong.
 Mind cannot mind despise—it is itself.
 Mind must love mind: the great and good are friends;
 And he is but half great who is not good.
 And, oh! humanity is the fairest flower
 Blooming in earthly breasts; so sweet and pure,

That it might freshen even the fadeless wreaths
Twined round the golden harps of those in Heaven.

Lucifer. For thy sake I will love even man, or aught.
Spirit were I, and a mere mortal thou,
For thy sake I would even seek to die;
That, dead or living, I might still be with thee.
But no ! I'll deem thee deathless—mind and make,
And worthier of some spirit's love than mine ;
Yea, of the first born of God's sons, could he,
In that sweet shade thy beauty casts o'er all,
One moment lay and cool his burning soul ;
Or might the ark of his wide flood-like woe
But rest upon that mount of peace and bliss—
Thy heart imbosomed in all beauteousness.

Nay, lady ! shrink not. Thinkest thou I am he ?

Elissa. Thou art too noble, far. I oft have wished,
Ere I knew thee, I had some spirit's love ;
But thou art more like what I sought than man :
And a forbidden quest, it seems ; for thou
Hast more of awe than love about thee, like
The mystery of dreams which we can feel,
But cannot touch.

Lucifer. Nay, think not so ! It is wrong.
Come, let us sit in this thy favourite bower,
And I will hear thee sing. I love that voice,
Dipping more softly on the subject ear
Than that calm kiss the willow gives the wave—
A soft rich tone, a rainbow of sweet sounds,
Just spanning the soothed sense. Come, nay me not.

Elissa. Do thou lead out some lay ; I'll follow thine.

Lucifer. Well, I agree. It will spare me much of shame
In coming after thee. My song is said
Of Lucifer the star. See, there he shines !

I am Lucifer, the star ;
Oh ! think on me,
As I lighten from afar
The Heavens and thee ;
In town, or tower,
Or this fair bower,
Oh ! think on me ;
Though a wandering star,
As the loveliest are,
I love but thee.

Lady! when I brightest beam,
 Love, look on me;
 I am not what I may seem
 To the world or thee;
 But fain would love
 With thee above,
 Where thou wilt be.
 But if love be a dream,
 As the world doth deem,
 What is't to me?

Elissa. Could we but deem the stars had hearts, and
 loved,
 They would seem happier, holier, even than now;
 And, ah! why not? they are so beautiful.
 And love is part and union in itself
 Of all that is in nature brilliant, pure—
 Of all in feeling sacred and sublime.
 Surely the stars are images of love:
 The sunbeam and the starbeam doth bring love.
 The sky, the sea, the rainbow, and the stream
 And dark blue hill, where all the loveliness
 Of earth and Heaven, in sweet extatic strife,
 Seem mingling hues which might immortal be,
 If length of life by height of beauty went:
 All seem but made for love—love made for all:
 We do become all heart with those we love:
 It is nature's self—it is everywhere—it is here.

Lucifer. To me there is but one place in the world,
 And that where thou art; for where'er I be,
 Thy love doth seek its way into my heart,
 As will a bird into her secret nest:
 Then sit and sing; sweet wing of beauty, sing.

Elissa. Bright one! who dwellest in the happy skies,
 Rejoicing in thy light as does the brave
 In his keen flashing sword, and his strong arm's
 Swift swoop, canst thou, from among the sons of men
 Single out those who love thee as do I
 Thee from thy fellow glories? If so, star,
 Turn hither thy bright front; I love thee, friend.
 Thou hast no deeds of darkness. All thou dost
 Is to us light and beauty: yea, thou art
 A globe all glory; thou who at the first
 Didst answer to the angels which in Heaven

Sang the bright birth of earth, and even now,
 As star by star is born, dost sing the same
 With countless hosts in infinite delight,
 Be unto me a moment ! Write thy bright
 Light on my heart before the sun shall rise
 And vanquish sight. Thou art the prophesy
 Of light which he fulfils. Speak, shining star,
 Drop from thy golden lips the truths of Heaven.
 First of all stars and favourite of the skies,
 Apostle of the sun—thou upon whom
 His mantle resteth—speak, prophetic beauty !
 Speak, shining star out of the heights of Heaven,
 Beautiful being, speak to God for man !
 Is it because of beauty thou wast chosen
 To be the sign of sin ? For surely sin
 Must be surpassing lovely when for her
 Men forfeit God's reward of deathless bliss,
 And life divine ; or, is it that such beauty,
 Sometimes before the truth, and sometimes after,
 As is a moral or a prophesy,
 Is ever warning ? Why wert thou accorded
 To the great Evil ? Is it because thou art
 Of all the sun's bright servants nearest earth ?
 And shall we then forget that Christ hath said
 He is thyself, the light-bringer of Heaven ?
 Star of the morning ! unto us thou art
 The presage of a day of power. Like thee
 Let us rejoice in life, then, and proclaim
 A glory coming greater than our own.
 All ages are but stars to that which comes,
 Sunlike. Oh ! speak, star ! Lift thou up thy voice
 Out of yon radiant ranks, and I on earth,
 As thou in Heaven, will bless the Lord God ever.
 Hear, Lucifer, thou star ! I answer thee.

Oh ! ask me not to look and love,
 But bid me worship thee ;
 For thou art earthly things above,
 As far as angels be :
 Then whether in the eve or morn
 Thou dost the maiden skies adorn,
 Oh ! let me worship thee !

I am but as this drop of dew ;
 Oh ! let me worship thee !
 Thy light, thy strength, is ever new,
 Even as the angels' be :
 And as this dewdrop, till it dies,
 Bosoms the golden stars and skies,
 Oh ! let me worship thee !

But, dearest, why that dark look ?

Lucifer. Let it not
 Cloud thine even with its shadow : but the ground
 Of all great thoughts is sadness ; and I mused
 Upon passed happiness. Well—be it passed !
 Did Lucifer, as I do, gaze on thee,
 The flame of woe would flicker in his breast,
 And straight die out—the brightness of thy beauty
 Quenching it as the sun doth earthly fire.

Elissa. Nay, look not on me so intensely sad.

Lucifer. Forgive me : it was an agony of bliss.
 I love thee, and am full of happiness.
 My bosom bounds beneath thy smile as doth
 The sea's unto the moon, his mighty mistress ;
 Lying and looking up to her, and saying—
 Lovely ! lovely ! lovely ! lady of the Heavens !
 Oh ! when the thoughts of other joyous days—
 Perchance, if such may be, of happier times—
 Are falling gently on the memory
 Like autumn's leaves distained with dusky gold,
 Yet softly as a snowflake ; and the smile
 Of kindliness, like thine, is beaming on me—
 Oh ! pardon, if I lose myself, nor know
 Whether I be with Heaven or thee.

Elissa. Use not
 Such ardent phrase, nor mix the claim of aught
 On earth with thoughts more than with hopes of Heaven.

Lucifer. Hopes, lady ! I have none.

Elissa. Thou must have. All
 Have hopes, however wretched they may be,
 Or blessed. It is hope which lifts the lark so high—
 Hope of a lighter air and bluer sky ;
 And the poor hawk which drops down on the flints—
 Upon whose eye the dust is settling—

He hopes to die. No being is which hath
Not love and hope.

Lucifer. Yes—one! The ancient Ill,
Dwelling and damned through all which is: that spirit
Whose heart is hate—who is the foe of God—
The foe of all.

Elissa. How knowest thou such doth live?
If one there be, the spirit foe of man,
It is only that inferiors still must strive.
With God they cannot strive nor dare to deem.
What single star could in itself abide
The onset of the armies of the Heavens?
How then all armies His, who all hath made?
And made in love? Oh, trust me, never fell
By love, a spirit or earthly or of Heaven.
Rather by love they are regenerate.
Love is the happy privilege of mind—
Love is the reason of all living things.
A Trinity there seems of principles,
Which represent and rule created life—
The love of self, our fellows, and our God.
In all throughout one common feeling reigns:
Each doth maintain and is maintained by the other:
All are compatible—all needful; one
To life—to virtue one—and one to bliss;
Which thus together make the power, the end,
And the perfection of created Being.
From these three principles doth every deed,
Desire, and will, and reasoning, good or bad, come;
To these they all determine—sum and scheme:
The three are one in centre and in round;
Wrapping the world of life as do the skies
Our world. Hail! air of love, by which we live;
How sweet, how fragrant! Spirit, though unseen—
Void of gross sign—is scarce a simple essence,
Immortal, immaterial, though it be.
One only simple essence liveth—God,—
Creator, uncreate. The brutes beneath,
The angels high above us, with ourselves,
Are but compounded things of mind and form.
In all things animate is therefore cored
An elemental sameness of existence;

For God, being Love, in love created all,
 As He contains the whole, and penetrates.
 Seraphs love God, and angels love the good :
 We love each other ; and these lower lives,
 Which walk the earth in thousand diverse shapes,
 According to their reason, love us too :
 The most intelligent affect us most.
 Nay, man's chief wisdom's love—the love of God.
 The new religion—final, perfect, pure—
 Was that of Christ and love. His great command—
 His all-sufficing precept—was't not love ?
 Truly to love ourselves we must love God—
 To love God we must all His creatures love—
 To love His creatures, both ourselves and Him.
 Thus love is all that's wise, fair, good, and happy.

Lucifer. How knowest thou God doth live ? Why did
 He not,

With that creating hand which sprinkled stars
 On space's bosom, bidding her breathe and wake
 From the long death-like trance in which she lay,—
 With that same hand which scattered o'er the sky,
 As this small dust I strew upon the wind,
 Yon countless orbs, aye fixing each on Him
 Its flaming eye, which winks and blenches oft
 Beneath His glance,—with the finger of that hand
 Which spangled o'er infinity with suns,
 And wrapped it round about Him as a robe,
 Why did He not write out His own great name
 In spheres of fire, that Heaven might alway tell
 To every creature, God ? If not, then why
 Should I believe when I behold around me
 Nought scarce, save ill and woe ?

Elissa.

God surely lives !

Without God all things are in tunnel darkness.
 Let there be God, and all are sun—all God.
 And to the just soul, in a future state,
 Defect's dark mist, thick-spreading o'er this vale,
 Shall dim the eye no more, nor bound survey ;
 And evil, now which boweth Being down
 As dew the grass, shall only fit all life
 For fresher growth and for intenser day,
 Where God shall dry all tears as the sun dew.

Lucifer. O lady! I am wretched.

Elissa.

Say not so.

With thee I could not deem myself unhappy.
Hark to the sea! It sounds like the near hum-
Of a great city.

Lucifer.

Say, the city earth;

For such these orbs are in the realms of space.

Elissa. I dreamed once that the night came down to me;

In figure, oh! too like thine own for truth,
And looked into me with his thousand eyes,
And that made me unhappy; but it passed,
And I half wished it back. Mind hath its earth
And Heaven. The many petty common thoughts
On which we daily tread, as it were, make one,
And above which few look; the other is
That high and welkin-like infinity—
The brighter, upper half of the mind's world,
Thick with great sun-like and constellate thoughts;
And in the night of mind, which is our sleep,
These thoughts shine out in dreams. Dreams double life;
They are the heart's bright shadow on life's flood;
And even the step from death to deathlessness—
From this earth's gross existence unto Heaven—
Can scarce be more than from the harsh hot day
To sleep's soft scenes, the moonlight of the mind.
The wave is never weary of the wind,
But in mountainous playfulness leaps to it
Always; but mind gets weary of the world,
And glooms itself in sleep, like a sweet smile,
Line by line, settling into proper sadness;
For sleep seems part of our immortality:
And why should anything that dies be sad?
Last night I dreamed I walked within a hall—
The inside of the world. Long shroud-like lights
Lit up its lift-like dome and pale wide walls,
Horizon-like; and every one was there;
It was the house of Death, and Death was there.
We could not see him, but he was a feeling:
We knew he was around us—heard us—eyed us;
But where wast thou? I never met thee once.
And all was still as nothing; or as God,
Deep judging, when the thought of making first

Quickened and stirred within Him ; and He made
All Heaven at one thought as at a glance.
Noise was there none ; and yet there was a sound
Which seemed to be half like silence, half like sound.
All crept about still as the cold wet worms,
Which slid among our feet, we could not 'scape from.
Round me were ruined fragments of dead gods—
Those shadows of the mystery of One—
And the red worms, too, flourished over these,
For marble is a shadow weighed with mind ;
Each being, as men of old believed, distinct
In form, and place and power. But oh ! not all
The gathered gods of Eld could shine like ours,
No more than all yon stars could make a sun.
But truly then men lived in moral night,
'Neath a dim starlight of religious truth.
I felt my spirit's spring gush out more clear,
Gazing on these : they beautified my mind
As rocks and flowers reflected do a well.
Mind makes itself like that it lives amidst,
And on ; and thus, among dreams, imaginings,
And scenes of awe, and purity, and power,
Grows sternly sweet and calm—all beautiful
With god-like coldness and unconsciousness
Of mortal passion, mental toil ; until,
Like to the marble model of a god,
It doth assume a firm and dazzling form,
Scarcely less incorruptible than that
It emblems : and so grew, methought, my mind.
Matter hath many qualities ; mind, one :
It is irresistible : pure power—pure god.
While wandering on I met what seemed myself :
Was it not strange that we should meet, and there ?
But all is strange in dreaming, as in death,
And waking, as in life : nought is not strange.
Methought that I was happy, because dead.
All hurried to and fro ; and many cried
To each other—Can I do thee any good ?
But no one heeded : nothing could avail :
The world was one great grave. I looked, and saw
Time on his two great wings—one, night—one, day—
Fly moth-like, right into the flickering sun ;

So that the sun went out, and they both perished
And one gat up and spake—a holy man—
Exhorting them ; but each and all cried out—
Go to !—it helps not—means not ; we are dead.
Death spake no word methought, but me he made
Speak for him ; and I dreamed that I was death ;
Then, that Death only lived : all things were mixed ;
Up and down shooting, like the brain's fierce dance
In a delirium, when we are apt to die.
Hell is my heir : what kin to me is Heaven ?
Bring out your hearts before me. Give your limbs
To whom ye list or love. My son, Decay,
Will take them : give them him. I want your hearts,
That I may take them up to God. There came
These words amongst us, but we knew not whence ;
It was as if the air spake. And there rose
Out of the earth a giant thing, all earth ;
His eye was earthy, and his arm was earthy ;
He had no heart. He but said, I am Decay ;
And as he spake, he crumbled into earth,
And there was nothing of him. But we all
Lifted our faces up at the word, God,
And spied a dark star high above in the midst
Of others, numberless as are the dead.
And all plucked out their hearts, and held them in
Their right hands. Many tried to pick out specks
And stains, but could not : each gave up his heart.
And something—all things—nothing—it was Death,
Said, as before, from air—Let us to God !
And straight we rose, leaving behind the raw
Worms and dead gods, all of us—soared and soared
Right upwards, till the star I told thee of
Looked like a moon—the moon became a sun :
The sun—there came a hand between the sun and us,
And its five fingers made five nights in air.
God tore the crown from off the sun's broad brow,
And flung the flaming glory flat to hell.
And then I heard a long, cold, skeleton scream,
Like a trumpet whining through a catacomb,
Which made the sides of that great grave shake in.
I saw the world and vision of the dead
Dim itself off—and all was life. I woke,

And felt the high sun blazoning on my brow,
 His own almighty mockery of woe,
 And fierce and infinite laugh at things which cease.
 Hell hath its light—and Heaven; he burns with both.
 And my dream broke, like life from the last limb—
 Quivering; so loth I felt to let it go,
 Just as I thought I had caught sight of Heaven.
 It came to nought, as dreams of Heaven on earth
 Do always.

Lucifer. It is time we part again.

Elissa. Farewell, then, gentle stars! To-night, farewell!
 For we all part at once. It is thus the bright
 Visions and joys of youth break up—but they
 For ever. When ye shine again I will
 Be with ye; for I love ye next to him.
 To all, adieu! When shall I see thee next?

Lucifer. Lady, I know not.

Elissa.

Say!

Lucifer.

Never, perchance.

Elissa. There is but one immortal in the world
 Who need say—never!

Lucifer.

What if I were he?

Elissa. But thou art not he; and thou shalt not
 say it.

There is not a thing so ill I would not save
 Had I the power, from ill, and from itself.

Lucifer. A thought inspired; it might have come from
 Heaven.

Thou art the soul of kindness.

Elissa.

Who so speaks

The soul of kindness, speaks the mind of God;

For nature is all kind, and all He made.

Justice and power are attributes of God,

But love His essence. How then harmonize

Infinite love with creatures' endless woe?

If every creatural act be finite, all

God's infinite, then must His love at last

Win every spirit, and all hate subdue.

Can God's will fail for ever? But He wills,

And must, that all souls should be saved and blessed.

As man could never be more just than God,

Shall God, too, be less merciful than man?

The soul create imperfect therefore sins
 Because imperfect ; but by Him redeemed,
 As by an universal sacrifice,
 Being is saved ; and sin gone, suffering ends.
 Then, finite nature, which can only know
 Imperfect good, by purifying spheres
 Of wisdom and progression, grace sustained,
 Harmonious lives with the eternal Heavens.
 Oh ! let us meet, and talk of things like these
 Always. I love the thoughts of boundless good.
 Stars rise and set—rise, set, and rise again
 In their sublime-like beauty through all time.
 Why should not we, too, ever meet, like them ?

Lucifer. I see no beauty—feel no love—all things
 Are unlovely.

Elissa. O earth ! be deaf ; and Heaven !
 Shut thy blue eye. He doth blaspheme the world.
 Dost not love me ?

Lucifer. Love thee ? Ay ! earth and Heaven,
 Together, could not make a love like mine !

Elissa. When wilt thou come again ? To-morrow ?

Lucifer. Well.

And then I cross yon sea ere I return ;
 For I have matters in another land.
 Fear not.

Elissa. When will our parting days be over ?

Lucifer. Oh ! soon—soon ! Think of me, love, on the
 waters !

Be happy ! and, for me, I love few things more
 Than at night to ride upon the broad-backed billow,
 Sealing along and plunging on his precipitous path ;
 While the red moon is westering low away,
 And the mad waves are fighting for the stars,
 Like men for—what they know not.

Elissa. Scorners !

Lucifer. Saint !

Elissa. The world hath much that is great ; and but
 one sea,

Which is her spirit ; and to her it stands
 As the mad monarch passion to the heart—
 Fathomless, overwhelming which receives
 The rivers of all feeling ; in whose depths

Lie wrecked the riches of all nature. God,
 When He did make thee, moved upon thee then,
 And left His impress there, the same even now
 As when thy last wave leapt from Chaos.—Hark!
 Nay, there is some one coming.

Festus entering. It is I.

I said we should be sure to meet thee here :
 For I have brought one who would speak with thee.

Lucifer. Thanks ! and where is he ?

Festus. Yonder. He would not
 Come up so far as this.

Lucifer. Who is it ?

Festus. I know not

Who he may be, or what ; but I can guess.

Lucifer. Remain a moment, love, till I return.

Elissa. Nay—let me leave !

Lucifer. Not yet : do not dislike him.
 He is a friend, and more another time.

Festus. I am sorry, lady, to have caused this parting.
 I fear I am unwelcome.

Elissa. We were parting.

Festus. Then am I doubly sorry ; for I know
 It is the saddest and the sacredest
 Moment of all with those who love.

Elissa. He is coming !

So I forgive thee.

Lucifer. I must leave thee, love :

I know not for how long ; it rests with thee

If it seem long at all. Eternity

Might pass, and I not know it in thy love.

Elissa. If to believe that I do love thee always
 May make time fly the fleeter—

Lucifer. I'll believe it—

Trust me. I leave this lady in thy charge,

Festus. Be kind—wait on her—may he, love ?

Elissa. Thou knowest. I receive him as thy friend
 Whenever he come.

Festus. I ask no higher title
 Than friend of the lovely and the generous.

Elissa. Farewell !

Festus. Lady ! I will not forget my trust.

(*Apart*) The breeze which curls the lake's bright lip but
 lifts

A purer, deeper, water to the light;
 The ruffling of the wild bird's wing but wakes
 A warmer beauty and a downier depth.
 That startled shrink, that faintest blossom-blush
 Of constancy alarmed!—Love! if thou hast
 One weapon in that shining armoury,
 The quiver on thy shoulder, where thou keep'st
 Each arrowy eye-beam feathered with a sigh;—
 If from that bow, shaped so like Beauty's lip,
 Strung with its string of pearls, thou wilt twang forth
 But one dart, fair into the mark I mean,—
 Do it, and I will worship thee for ever:
 Yea, I will give thee glory and a name
 Known, sunlike, in all nations. Heart be still!

Lucifer. This parting over—

Elissa. Yes, this one—and then?

Lucifer. Why, then another, may be.

Elissa. No—no more.

I'll be unhappy if thou tell'st me so.

Lucifer. Well, then—no more.

Elissa. But when wilt thou come back?

Lucifer. Almost before thou wishest. He will know.

Elissa. I shall be always asking him.

Lucifer. One word

Apart with thee ere yet thou leavest. Know,
 I have with him a purpose thou mayst aid.
 Conscious though careless of the future, he
 Thou wot'st of breathes premarked to mighty ends,
 The heir of fate; and though to states unknown,
 The destined head he lives of power mundane,
 Than grandest monarch's more. His soul, as yet
 Absorbed in love of wisdom, and his heart
 In beauty's starry smile steeped, lack the lure
 To climb ambition's heights, where yet his foot
 Outstepping all is due. If thou, possessed
 With aught of friendly impulse, to that end
 Couldst wake into a glow the torpid gleeds
 Which wait the inspiring breath, words, as may suit,
 Of ardour or contempt—forms audible—
 Thy fealty to me wards I hold firm,—
 It will much advantage me, and mine own ends
 Advance.

Elissa. I doubt not, but in worthy purposes,
One might adventure more than words; and this
Towers on the mind more grandly, as the thought
Is contemplated.

Lucifer. True. Perchance himself
Urged warily may to thine ears confide
The future, and success concert with thee.
Tempt him, and he might name thee Queen of earth.
Yea, stamped by thine ascendant soul, commence
That bright career the world awaits.

Elissa. And thou?
What part hast thou in this?

Lucifer. A great one I,
Though not like his.

Elissa. Ah, me! A second-best.

Lucifer. Who doeth not great things with equal ease,
And small, doth but indifferently.

Elissa. We all
Have met ere now.

Lucifer. My fault it shall not be
That ye are strangers.

Elissa. Say for me—farewell!—

Lucifer. Shine on, ye stars! and light her to her rest;
Scarce are ye worthy for her handmaidens.
Why, Hell would laugh to learn I had been in love.
As rumour through some impish spy may blab,
And would be blind, as they oft are who laugh;
Not seeing their own folly, nor the flaw
Which stars their self-deceit. These twain I bring
Together as prime factors in my sum,
The evil most profound I can achieve—
Earth's sudden death. Yet, through the boundless mist
Of mockery I have played with, one bright peak,
Sharp, solid, peers into the upper light;
One thought of good, one seed of sacred truth,
One priceless pearl fallen from love's fairy lips
Hath sunk into my soul. It irks me not,
Though, like the projective powder of adept,
Hell's base metallic mass it should transmute
Into one pure and perfect orb of gold,
The future is to be; and not as yet
Can I be balked. Eradicated good

Hath heretofore the aim been of my being.
 Shall I not strive to root it out then, hence ?
 See which is stronger, that, or I ? though helped
 By all creation's wrong and wretchedness ?
 The war of good and evil narrowed here
 To mine own spirit, it is time to force the strife.
 All obstacles must be removed, the fates
 Are fast maturing to their end, at once.
 Thou seemest fixed in thought, as a star in space.
 Hast thought of that, I whilom promised thee ?
 Thy lady fair and friend, embodying, thus,
 The mystic triad of the wise ? The sage
 I named, and after, sought, is now prepared.
 Wilt thou thy heart's compeers thereto advise ?

Festus. I scarce think—

Lucifer. Ye are bounden.

Festus. Soon, then soon.

My mind is now intent on other aims.

Lucifer. The world perhaps will hear of ?

Festus. Ay, anon.

Lucifer. I have affairs in hell. Wilt go with me ?

Festus. Yes, in a month or two :—not just this minute.

Lucifer. I shall be there and back again ere then.

Festus. Meanwhile I can amuse myself : so, go !

But some time I would fain behold thy home,
 And pass the gates of fire.

Lucifer. And so thou shalt.

My home is everywhere where spirit is.

Festus. The strongest passion which I have is honour :
 I would I had none : it is in my way.

Guardian Angel. One moment, Festus ; go ! I follow.

Lucifer. Gone ?

All things are as I meant them, on the ridge
 Of ruin, how we brave it ; as though one,
 Ambitious of a seat in Heaven, above
 The cloud-encumbered pathway of the wind,
 Should sit the tremulous bridge, all-hued, which spans
 Air's stormy realms, fate scorning. Let me think.

Guardian Angel. Thy great decrees, O God of grace !
 be given

To humblest spirits to know ; too blessed if they,
 Thy holy secrets sharing, live, depute,

To work Thy universal will, and ground
 In Thine intents the all-embracing Heavens.
 Empowered by Thee to serve Thine ends divine,
 We learn the thoughts of others ; and in this wise
 Now know I thine, O Lucifer ! thy schemes
 'Gainst God's elect, by mortal, fatal sin
 To ruin ; but the words within thy spirit,
 Let fall by her thou once wouldst sacrifice—
 I, and her angel here together prayed—
 Like the atomic seed of worlds, the heart
 And nucleus of new nature shall betimes,
 By will of God regenerate ; and all aims
 Of creatural evil frustrate, God's sole end
 Of universal good o'erride all bounds ;
 And in His infinite satisfaction close
 The world of life :—words which, truth-soul'd, have struck
 To the main root of Being ; thoughts of good
 Thou canst not now annihilate ; hopes which bear,
 Though silent, witness not to be suppressed
 By time, like earth's immarbled sediments,
 To age-compressing floods. Thou wilt not brook
 To her, harm ; even this can I foresee ;
 And thus thy first good deed, rebuking thought
 Of ill in other, shall both her and him
 Whom thou wouldst lure to ill, and loss of bliss,
 Them and thee profit. Time, and God's high will
 Shall all things else educe, as writ in Heaven.
 But he shall know my presence ere I go.
 Spirit, I warn thee !

Lucifer. What ! celestial friend !
 Meet we once more ?

Guardian Angel. At last, let mockery cease.

Lucifer. Let mockery cease. I have—is this not true ?
 To be is something, to believe is more—
 While owning Him Supreme, believed His good,
 Yet bounded by mine evil ?

Guardian Angel. O, conceit
 Most false, most fearful ! How then shall He gain
 The victories He hath promised to Himself,
 And all, in everlasting prophecies,
 If He subdue not evil and transform
 All ill to good ? That were a victory vast,

And, of none other hand achievable,
Worthy indeed of God.

Lucifer. This, sole, I see.
I must work out all evil to the end.
But dare I meet annihilative fate?
It reck not, I can brave it to the last.

Guardian Angel. My lips are sealed; mine eyes.

Lucifer. Mine too. Around
The cavéd Heavens I grope, nor see escape;
This everlasting vault, these tomb-like skies!

SCENE—*Everywhere.*

FESTUS and LUCIFER.

Festus. Why earth is in the very midst of Heaven!
And space, though void of things, feels full of God.
Hath space no limit?

Lucifer. None to thee. Yet, if
Infinite, it would equal God; and that
To think of is most vain.

Festus. And yet if not
Infinite how can God exist therein?

Lucifer. I say not.

Festus. No. So soon when placed beside
The infinite the poor immortal fails.

Lucifer. It is God contains the Infinite, not that God.
Space is God's space: eternity is His
Eternity; His, Heaven. He only holds
Perfections, which are but the impossible
To other beings.

Festus. We are things of time.

Lucifer. With God time is not. Unto Him all is
Present eternity. Worlds, beings, years,
With all their natures, powers, and events,
The range whereof when making He ordains,
Unfold themselves like flowers. He foresees
Not, but sees all at once. Time must not be
Contrasted with eternity: it is not
A second of the everlasting year.
Perfections, although infinite with God,
Are all identical; as much of Him—
And holy is His mercy, merciful

His wisdom, wise His love, and kind His wrath—
 As form, extension, parts, are requisites
 Of matter. Spirit hath no parts. It is
 One substance, whole and indivisible,
 Whatever else. Souls see each other clear
 At one glance, as two drops of rain in air
 Might look into each other, had they life.
 Death doth away disguise.

Festus.

Even here I feel

Among these mighty things, that, as I am,
 I am akin to God;—that I am part
 Of the use universal, and can grasp
 Some portion of that reason in the which
 The whole is ruled and founded;—that I have
 A spirit nobler in its cause and end,
 Lovelier in order, greater in its powers,
 Than all these bright immensities—how swift!
 And doth creation's tide for ever flow,
 Nor ebb with like destruction? World on world
 Are they for ever heaping up, and still
 The mighty measure never full?

Lucifer.

To act

Is power's habit; always to create,
 God's; which, thus ever causing worlds, to Him
 Nought cumbrous more than new down to a wing,
 Aye multiplies at once my power and pain.
 I have seen many frames of Being pass.
 This generation of the universe
 Will soon be gathered to its grave. These worlds,
 Which bear its sky-pall, soon will follow thine.
 I, both. All things must die.

Festus.

What are ye orbs?

The words of God—the scriptures of the skies?
 For words with Him cannot be passing, nor
 Less real, vast, or glorious than yourselves.
 The world is God's great poem, and the worlds
 The words it is writ in, and we souls the thoughts.
 Ye cannot die.

Lucifer. Think not on death. Here all
 Is life, light, beauty. Harp not so on death.

Festus. I cannot help me, spirit! Chide no more.
 As who dare gaze the sun, doth after see

Betwixt him and else a dark sun in his eye ;
 So I, once having braved my burning doom,
 See nought beside—or that in everything.
 Hark, what is that I hear ?

Lucifer.

An angel weeping—

Earth's guardian angel. She is ever weeping.

Festus. See where she flies, spirit-torn, round the
 heavens,

Like a fore-feel of madness about the brain.

Angel of Earth.

Stars, stars !

Stop your bright cars !

Stint your breath—

Repent ere worse—

Think of the death

Of the universe.

Fear doom, and fear

The fate of your kin-sphere.

As a corse in the tomb,

Earth ! thou art laid in doom :

The worm is at thy heart.

I see all things part :—

The bright air thicken,

Thunder-stricken :

Birds from the sky

Shower like leaves :

Streamlets stop

Like ice on eaves :

The sun go blind :

Swoon the wind

On the high hill top—

Swoon and die :

Earth rear off her cities

As a horse his rider ;

And still, with each death-strain,

Her heart-wound tear wider :

The lion roar and die

With his eye-balls on the sky :

The eagle scream

And drop like a beam :

Men crowd and cry,

Out on this deathful dream !

A low dull sound—
'Tis the march of many bones
Under ground ;
Up ! and they fling,
Like a fly's wing,
Off them the gray grave-stones ;
They sit in their biers—
Father and mother,
Man and wife,
Sister and brother,
As in life ;
Lady and lover—
Love all over.
Their flesh re-appears—
Their hearts beat—
Their eyes have tears :
Woe ! woe !
Do they speak ?
Stir ! No !
Tongues were too weak,
Save to repeat
Woe !
But they smile
In a while ;
For to wipe from His word
The dust of years,
He comes ! he comes ! the Lord.
Man-God, re-appears ;
To bless, and to save
From death and the grave—
To redeem and deliver
For ever and ever !
The dead rise—
Death dies.
Go, Time, and sink
Thy great thoughts in the sea !
And quench thy red link !
Let him flutter to rest
On thy God-nursing breast,
Eternity !
Mother Eternity !
What is for me ?

Festus. Poor angel! Ah! it is the good who suffer.
 Look! like a cloud, she hath wept herself away.
 What of this world we view and all yon worlds?
 If God made not all things from nothing, how
 Is He creator? Something must exist
 If otherwise, eternal with Himself;
 And all things had not origin in him.

Lucifer. He made all things of Him. The visible
 world
 Is as the Christ of nature; God the maker
 In matter made self-manifest through time.
 All things are formed of all things—all of God.
 The world is made of wonders. Every day
 Is born a new creation. Every orb
 Hath its revealéd word; and every race
 Of being hath its judgment, or shall have.

Festus. Are all these worlds, then, stocked with souls
 like man's—
 Free, fallible, and sinful?

Lucifer. Ay, they are.
 All creature-minds, like man's, are fallible.
 The seraph who in Heaven highest stands
 May fall to ruin deepest. God is mind—
 Pure, perfect, sinless. Man imperfect is—
 Momently sinning. Evil then results
 From imperfection. The idea of good
 Is owned in imperfection's lowest form.
 God would not, could not, make aught wholly ill,
 Nor aught not like to err. Man never was
 Perfect nor pure, or he would be so now.
 Thy nature hath some excellencies—these
 Oft thwarted by low lusts and wicked wills.
 What then? They are necessitate in kind,
 As change in nature, or as shade to light.
 No darkness hath the sun—no weakness God:
 These only be the faulty qualities
 Of secondary natures—planets, men.
 God hath no attributes unless To Be
 Be one: 'twould mix Him with the things He hath made.
 God is all God, as life is that which lives.
 I am a mighty spirit, and yet I
 Am but to God what lightning is to light:

Lightning slays one thing—light makes all things live.
 Bear, then, thy necessary ills with grace :
 No positive estate or principle
 Is Evil—debtor wholly for its form
 And measure to defect—defect to good.
 Good's the sole positive principle in the world ;
 It is only thus, that what God makes He loves—
 And must : the others are but off-shoots. Ill
 Is limited. One cannot form a scheme
 For universal evil ; not even I.

Festus. Can imperfection from perfection come ?
 Can God make aught defective ?

Lucifer. How aught else ?
 There are but three proportions in all things—
 The greater—equal—less. God could not make
 A God above Himself, nor equal with—
 By nature and necessity the Highest ;
 So, if He make, it must be lesser minds—
 Little and less from angels down to men,
 Whose natures are imperfect, as His own
 Must be all-perfect. These two states are not,
 Except as whole unto its parts, opposed ;
 And evil is itself no ill unless
 Creation be.

Festus. Is God the cause of evil ?

Lucifer. So far as evil comes from imperfection,
 And imperfection from the things He hath made,
 And what He hath made from His will to make.

Festus. Oh ! let me rest, be it but a moment's pause !
 This endless light-like journey wearies me.
 Remember still my spirit toils in dust—
 A dark close cloud.

Lucifer. Alight, then, on this orb.
 I am not wearied : I will watch by thee.
 He sleeps—he dreams. How far men see in dreams !
 In dreams they can accomplish worlds of things :
 The heart then suffers a fusion of all feeling
 Back to its youthful hours of innocence,
 And nakedness, and paradise ; ere yet
 The world had wound a perishing garb around it ;
 While yet its God came down and spake to it.
 Such and so great are dreams. My night, my being

To him is but a dream's. And could a state
To come fill up their dream-stretched minds, they might
Be gods. And may it not be so? Then man
Is worth my ruining. What doth he dream?
With all the sway his spirit now exerts
O'er time, space, thought, it is but a shadowy sway;
Light as a mountain shadow on a lake.
Mine is the mountain's self. A touch would shake
To nought whatever his soul now feels or acts;
But not a world-quake could touch aught of mine:
Thus much we differ. I will not envy man.
Power alone makes being bearable.
And yet this dream-power is mind-power—real:
All things are real: fiction cannot be.
A thought is real as the world—a dream
True as all God doth know—with whom all is true.
The deep dense sleep of half-dead exhaustedness!
Would I could feel it. Ah! he wakes at last.

Festus. Oh! I have dreamed a dream so beautiful!
Methought I lay as it were here! and, lo!
A spirit came and gave me wings of light,
Which thrice I waved delighted. Up we flew
Sheer through the shining air, far past the sun's
Broad blazing disk,—past where the great great snake
Binds in his bright coil half the host of Heaven,—
Past thee, Orion! who, with arm uplift,
Like him the divine evil of the world,
Threatening the throne of God, dost ever stand
Sublimely impious; and thy mighty mace
Whirling on high, down from its glorious seat
Drops, crushed and shattered, many a shining world.
And so the brave and beautiful of old
Believed thou wast a giant made of worlds:
And they were right, if thus they bodied out
The immortal mind; for it hath starlike beauty,
And worldlike might; and is as high above
The things it scorns, and will make war with God,
Though He gave it earth and Heaven, and arms to win
Them both; and, spite of lust and pride, to earn them.
And now thy soul informs yon hundred stars,
As mine my limbs—well, 'tis a noble end.
What now to thee be mortal maid or goddess?

Look ! she who fled thee once, now loves and longs
To clasp thee to her cold and beamy breast.
Pine Moon ! thou art as far below him now,
As once she was above thee, thou of the world-belt !
And she who had thee, and who knew thee god,
Died of her boast, and lies in her own dust.
And she who loved thee, the young blushy Morning,
Who caught thee in her arms, and bore thee off
Far o'er the lashing seas to a lonely isle,
Where she might pleasure longer and in secret—
That love undid thee, and it is so now :
Whether the beauty seek, or flee, or have,
'Tis a like ill—this beauty doubly mortal.
What though the Moon with madness slew thee there,
Let me believe it was within the arms
That loved thee even in the arms of death,
And that there snapped the lightning link of life.
Kill, but not conquer, man nor mind may gods.
Thou image of the Almighty error, man !
Banished and banned to Heaven, by a weak world,
Which makes the minds it cannot master gods.
And thou, the first and greatest of half-gods,
Which they in olden time did star together
To an idolatrous immortality ;
Who nationalized the skies, and gave all stars
Unto the spirits of the good and brave,
Forestalling Heaven by ages—wondrous men !
And if—beguiled by wine, and the low wiles
Thou wouldst not creep to meet, and a drunken sleep,
Like to high noon in the midst of all his might,
Close by the brink of immortality—
The deep dominions of thy sea-sire, thou
Didst lose thy light by kings who hate the great,
Thou only hadst to stand up to the sun,
And gain again thine eyes. So the great king,
The world, the tyrant we elect, in vain
Puts out the eyes of mind : it looks to God,
And reaps its light again. Wherefore, revenge ;
Out with the sword ! the world will run before thee,
Orion ! belted giant of the skies !
Thou with the treble strain of godhood in thee !
March ! there is nought to hinder thee in Heaven :—

Past that great sickle saved for one day's work,
 When He who sowed shall reap Creation's field ;—
 Past those bright diademed orbs which show to man
 His crown to come ;—up through the starry strings
 Of that high harp close by the feet of God,
 Which He, methought, took up and struck, till Heaven,
 In love's immortal madness, rang and reeled ;
 The stars fell on their faces ; and, far off,
 The wild world halted—shook his burning mane—
 Then, like a fresh-blown trumpet blast, went on,
 Or like a god gone mad. On, on we flew,
 I and the spirit, far beyond all things
 Of measure, motion, time and aught create ;
 Where the stars stood on the edge of the first nothing,
 And looked each other in the face and fled,—
 Past even the last long starless void, to God ;
 Whom straight I heard, methought, commanding thus :
 Immortal ! I am God. Hie back to earth,
 And say to all, that God doth say—Love God !

Lucifer. God visits men adreaming : I, awake.

Festus. And my dream changed to one of general doom.
 Wilt hear it ?

Lucifer. Ay, say on ! It is but a dream.

Festus. God made all mind and motion cease ; and lo !
 The whole was death and peace. An endless time
 Obtained, in which the power of all made failed.
 God bade the worlds to judgment, and they came—
 Pale, trembling, corpse-like. To the souls therein
 Then spake the Maker : Deathless spirits, rise !
 And straight they thronged around the throne. His arm
 The Almighty then uplift, and smote the worlds
 Once, and they fell in fragments like to spray,
 And vanished in their native void. He shook
 The stars from Heaven like rain-drops from a bough ;
 Like tears they poured adown creation's face.
 Spirit and space were all things. Matter, death,
 And time, left not even a wake to tell
 Where once their track o'er Being. God's own light,
 Undarkened and unhindered by a sun,
 Glowed forth alone in glory. And through all
 A clear and tremulous sense of God prevailed,
 Like to the blush of love upon the cheek,

Or the full feeling lightening through the eye,
 Or the quick music in the chords of harps.
 God judged all creatures unto bliss or woe,
 According to their deeds, and faith, and His
 Own will: and straight the saved upraised a voice
 Which seemed to emulate eternity
 In its triumphant overblessedness.
 The lost leaped up and cursed God to His face—
 A curse might make the sun turn cold to hear;
 And thee, in all thy burning glory, tremble,
 In front of all thy angels, like a chord.
 Rage writhed each brow into a changeless scowl.
 Madly they mocked at God, and dared His eye,
 Safe in their curse of deathlessness. To hell
 They hied like storms; and, cursing all things, each
 Soul wrapped him in his shroud of fire for aye,
 With one long loud howl which seemed to deafen Heaven—
 And then I woke.

Lucifer. A wild fantastic dream!

A mere mirage of mind! Come, let us leave;
 We have seen enough of this world.

Festus. Lift me up, then.

World upon world how they come rolling on!
 But none I see so beauteous as earth.

Lucifer. Behold these spheres. These be Heaven's
 golden harps,
 By God strung, struck by angels; making now
 Harmonious worlds, now worlds of harmony.

Festus. There is so much to love that is purely earth.
 Now I could wander all day in the wood,
 Where nature, like a sibyl, writes the fate
 Of all that live on her red forest leaves:
 And have no other aim than wandering
 Within that wood, and wind my arms around
 Its grey gaunt trunks, and think and feel to them;
 While the wind, sinking, moans over the earth
 Like a giant over some dead captive dame,
 Whom death hath saved from madness and his love;—
 Could tramp across the brown and springy moor,
 And over the purple ling, and never tire;
 Could look upon the ripple of a river,
 Or on a tree's long shadow down a hill,

For a whole summer's day, wishing the sun
 Would drink my soul up to him as he draws
 Dew from the earth. These things are in my mind,
 And suns and systems cannot drive them out;
 Nor universal system of all suns.
 Dost ravage all these worlds?

Lucifer. Ay, all mine own.
 Where spirit is, there evil; and the world
 Is full of me as ocean is of brine.

Festus. God is all perfect; man imperfect. Thou?

Lucifer. I am the imperfection of the whole;
 The great negation of the universe;
 The pitch profoundest of the fallible.
 Myself the all of evil which exists;
 The ocean heaped into a single surge.

Festus. O God! why wouldst Thou make the universe?

Lucifer. Child! quench yon suns; strip death of its
 decay;

Men of their follies—hell of all its woe!
 These if thou didst, thou couldst not banish me.
 I am the shadow which Creation casts
 From God's own light.—But here we are, at hell.
 Hark to the thunderous roaring of its fires;
 Yet ere we further pass—stop! dost thou shrink?

Festus. At nought—not I! Come on, fiend! follow me!

SCENE—*Hell.*

LUCIFER and FESTUS entering.

Lucifer. Behold my world! Man's science counts it
 not

Upon the brightest sky. He never knows
 How near it comes to him: but swathed in clouds
 As though in plumed and palléd state, it steals
 Hearselike and thieflike round the universe,
 For ever rolling and returning not—
 Robbing all worlds of many an angel soul—
 With its light hidden in its breast, which burns
 With all concentrate and superfluent woe.
 Nor sun nor moon illume it, and to those
 Which dwell in it, not live, the starry skies
 Have told no time since first they entered there.

Worlds have been built, and to their central base
 Ruined and rased to the last atom; they.
 Of neither know nor can—unconscious save
 To agony—nought knowing even of God
 But His omnipotence to execute
 Torture on those He hath in wrath endowed
 With Heaven's own immortality, to make
 Them feel what woe the Almighty can inflict,
 And the all-feeble suffer, and not be
 Annihilated as they would. Be sure
 That this is hell. The blood which hath embrued
 Earth's breast, since first men met in war, may hope
 Yet to be formed again and reascend,
 Each drop its individual vein; the foam bubble,
 Sun-drawn out of the sea into the clouds,
 To scale the cataract down which it fell,
 Or seek its primal source in earth's hot heart;
 But for the lost to rise to or regain
 Heaven, or to hope it is impossible.

Festus. Are all these angels then, or men, or both?
 Or mortals of all worlds?

Lucifer.

Immortals all.

Festus. What numbers!

Lucifer. All are spirits fallen through sin

At various periods of eternity;
 And not by one offence, to one same doom,
 And at one moment, did they down from Heaven
 Like to the rapid droppings of a shower;—
 No! each distinct as thunderpeals, they fell.
 Save those that fell with me. With me began
 Sin even in Heaven; with me but sin remains.
 Once I alone was Hell. Behold my fruits!

Festus. What do yon fiends? Some 'mong them look
 like mortals:

Their hearts shine through them like live coals through
 ashes.

They look like madmen gone delirious.

Oh, horror! Let me hence.

Lucifer.

Nay, hear.

Festus.

I hear

A strain incongruous as a merry dirge,
 Or sacramental bacchanal might be.

Lucifer. Men are they not, but devils at the best ;
And I would have thee mark them.

Festus. I attend.

Lucifer. Behold the cup of dæmons, and their board,
Their fellowship, their triumph, their employ ;
Their everliving hatred, and delight !

Fiends. Heap high the fires of hell ! let woe not languish.
Heap up with everlasting flames, heap higher ;
There let the man-fiend, consummate in anguish,
Howl through the fathomless profound of fire.
To tempt and ruin those that once were solely
God's, and torment them when with us they dwell—
This is our end, and their existence wholly
Hid in the doom no demon dares to tell,
But is shadowed in the harrowing eternity of hell.
Deeper than the bowl the drunkard drained so gladly,
Deadlier than the lie which scorched the liar's tongue,
Keener than the blade the murderer plied so madly,
Eats aye into the essence the worm that all hath stung.
And for that they succumbed to the toils wherewith we bound them
Their bread is burning brimstone, their drink is bubbling fire ;
For they live upon the nature of the tortures that surround them,
And their life is in the death they shall never see expire ;
Lo ! it floweth from the fountains of the ever-seething ire.

Festus. Nay, let me quit ! now know I what hell is.
What are they—drunkards, liars, murderers ?

Lucifer. Can wine destroy the soul ? or hell's fierce
flames

Feed upon holy water wherewith Priest
Baptizeth sinless babe ? Can liar make
God lie ? or cheat his neighbour of his soul ?
No ! God's salvation waiteth not on man's
Weak will or ministry : nor man's perdition
Upon his brother's hatred or neglect.
Can murderer slay the soul ? or suicide
Drug immortality ? Their sin is great,
And is eternally condemned of God,
But of their nature, the which death destroys,
Their own as well as victim's recompense.
When Time hath overcome the ruin wrought
Upon their hearts who loved the dead, that they
Who suffered most have most forgiven ill,
Shall the dead slay the living ceaselessly ?
Shall God, who is all Love, reverse, reserve,

Here in hell, ages afterwards, those crimes?
 And because man hath sinned a moment crown
 All crime in instituting punishment
 Unending for an instantaneous wrong?
 Shall that be justice? It were more than vengeance.
 Hath not Christ said, five hundred times forgive?
 And shall God act by a less perfect law
 Than that He hath Himself enjoined on man?
 Yet such the Deity men fable, such
 The hell whereto they doom themselves.

Festus.

No more.

The world is all sufficient for itself;
 And hell and heaven are not the equivalents
 Of earth's iniquities and righteousness.

Lucifer. Can those who are idolators defraud
 God of His worship? who adore the world,
 Gold, or as savages, the stars and Heaven,
 And elements of earth? None worship Him,
 But with and in His spirit. Nought attains
 His love but that proceedeth from it first.
 His praise is everlasting in all worlds
 And starry ages of eternity.

Can they who covet the world's worthiest goods,
 Wealth, honour, power, knowledge, harmless all,
 Merit eternal fire for sin, so called,
 Wherewith is bound the world's prosperity
 And human glory? Nought eternal is
 But that which is of God. All pain and woe
 Are therefore finite. Can the robber steal
 From God or Heaven a thing or from the soul?
 Or the deflowerer desecrate and undo
 The espousals of the spirit with its Lord?
 How weak is virtue, then, and vice, how vain!
 How wretched human righteousness—and sin,
 How despicable to the soul assured,
 Since neither hath a recompense. The one
 By Him destroyed who can alone unmake
 That he hath made; the other perfected,
 United, Deified in God the Son
 With His own nature. Infinite Universe!
 Thou hast no like, no second favourite
 To mortal man of God's.

Festus. What mean the words
Of yonder fiendish chant, then ?

Lucifer. Words and shapes
Are equally as soon assumed by spirits.
Sin, with deep draughts of fiery venom fed,
Drains to the latest dreg of murderous flame
Its own-consuming fate, self-punitive
By pure destruction, self annihilate,
Constructing its own death ; its own defeat
Scheming with fatal skill ; as I myself,
The lord of evil, fear I am. If God's
Good will gave all things being, then His hate—
What is unholy, He detests to death,—
Cannot do less than, were it even the All,
Annihilate. Evil, left to itself,
Corrupts itself away. When ends the world
I end ; a glorious hope. But His high will
O'errides, o'errules the all, child of His power.
When therefore all is ended and at last
Time's sun, declining down the eternal skies,
Leaves his last shining shadow on the sea,
And in the boundless abyss entombs his beams ;
When final evening folds the universe
Heavily round, then hell shall drain the dread
Cup of perdition to the last drop. Death
Is of all things thou thinkest most like sleep :
The dead think otherwise. But wherefore thus ?
What mean my words to thee ?

Festus. In sooth, I know not.
I am constrained to hear them.

Lucifer. As for these !—
It is a fire of soul in which they burn,
And by which they are purified from sin—
Rid of the grossness which had gathered round them,
And burned again into their virgin brightness.
All things work round like worlds. The orb of hell
Hath yet its place in Heaven as thine and all.
But, as a spiritual quality,
As spirit is the substance of all matter—
Hidden or open, heatlike doth inhere
In all existence—or for good or ill.
Look at yon spirit.

Festus. What was it brought thee hither ?

Spirit. I was an angel once, ages ago;
But doing good and glorifying not
God, who empowered me, He sent me here
To fire the proud spot from my heart.

Festus. And when
Wilt thou do this, and own thou hast wronged God?

Spirit. I do repent me, and confess it now.
I will not ask God now to let me be
What once I was; but might I only sit
A footstool for some other worthier far
Who owneth now my throne, I should be happy;
Far happier than I was in my proud prayers,
That God would give me worlds on worlds to govern,
And in receiving all their prayers and blessings.
O God! remember me! O save me!

Festus. See!
I do believe there is an angel coming
This way from Heaven.

Spirit. He comes to me—to me!

Angel. Hail, sufferer!

Spirit. Sinner.

Angel. God hath made me bring thee
Away to Heaven; thy throne is kept for thee;
And all the hosts of Heaven are on the wing
To welcome thee again!

Spirit. I dare not come:
I am not worthy Heaven.

Angel. But God will make thee.

Festus. *Spirit*—farewell! and may we meet again
In better time and place.

Spirit. Glory to God!
I go—farewell!—and I will speak of thee.
But oh! repent. Be humble, and despair not.

[*Angel and Spirit rise.*]

Lucifer. Oh! think when all are judged, what hosts of
souls
Will then be mine at last!—what wings of fire!
Deemest thou yet as mortal?

Festus. This is not
As thou didst speak of hell, nor as I judged.

Lucifer. Hell is the wrath of God—His hate of sin.
God hates man's nature; be it said of his
As of all beings.

Festus. How hate that He hath made?

Lucifer. The infinite opposition of Perfection
To imperfection leaves nor choice nor mean.
Thus the demeanour of thy world grieved God,
Till its destruction pleased Him, and its name
Was struck out of the starry scroll; thus all
Creation worketh infinite grief in Time.
When human nature is most perfect, then
Its fall is nearest, as of ripest fruit.
Man's pleasure in the world—to both of which
His nature is made fit—is not of God,
Save theirs on whom His spirit He bestows,
As in a twilight between earth and Heaven,
A promissory Being unfulfilled—
But still how glorious to the stone-blind world.
This is in time, but in eternity
He raises, remakes, adds to all He hath made
His own immortalizing love and grace,
Which keeps them ever pure as is the sea,
And incorruptible in godly will.
The bliss of God and man originates,
Unites, and ends in self, in Deity :
To whom is neither motive—good—nor end
Greater or less or other than Himself.

Festus. But how can the Creator glory find
In hell, or creature, good—if God be Love,
Or man a being salvable? Oh say!
But who comes hither?

Lucifer. It is the Son of God!
Omnipotent! before whose steadfast feet
The thrones of Heaven, which hoped to have o'erthrown

Thine,
But now all strengthless, hopeless, Godless here,
Rose once and ebb'd for ever, even these
Deep in their fiery abyss of woe
Unbent, unbettered will again rush forth
In all the might of madness and despair,
To prove their hatred of Thee and Thy love.
Salvation is the scorn of angels here.
What dost Thou here, not having sinned?

Son of God. For men
I bore with death—for fiends I bear with sin;
And death and sin are each the pain I pay

For the love which brought me down from Heaven to save
Both men and devils : and the Father makes
And orders every instant what is best.

Festus. This is God's truth : Hell feels a moment cool.

Son of God. Hell is His justice—Heaven is His love—
Earth His long-suffering : all the world is but
A quality of God ; therefore come I
To temper these—to give to justice, mercy ;
And to long-suffering, longer. Heaven is mine
By birthright. Lo ! I am the heir of God ;
He hath given all things to me. I have made
The earth mine own, and all yon countless worlds,
And all the souls therein ; yea, soul by soul,
And world by world, have I redeemed them all—
One by one through eternity, or given
The means of their salvation : why not, then,
Hell ?

Festus. Every spirit is to be redeemed.

Son of God. Mortal ! it has : the best and worst need one
And same salvation. There is nothing final
In all this world but God ; therefore these souls
Whom I see here, and pity for their woes—
But for their evil more—these need not be.
Inhelled for ever ; for although once, twice, thrice,
On earth or here they may have put God from them—
Disowned His prophets—mocked His angels—slain
His Son in His mortality—and stormed
His curses back to Him ; yet God is such,
That He can pity still ; and I can suffer
For them, and save them. Father ! I fear not
But by Thy might I can save hell from hell.
See, here be they which fell of old, through pride.
Created mind could ne'er the thought conceive
Of equalness with God, unless by first
Debasing the idea. They err who feign
The devil by ambition fell from Heaven.
He in the Godstate first with all his hosts
By fate inhered ; by fate with all his host,
As cloud to cloud succeeds on the hill side,
They darkened and declined and passed away.
Through pride in what they were they fell, and not
Ambition to be other. These while yet

The dew lay of Creation's morn, and now,
Glistens the dew of evening o'er the world.
Mixed in one stormy ruin with the rest,
Lo ! mortal, those who lost by mortal love
Their lot in the eternal.

Festus.

Save them, Lord !

Son of God. Salvation is the will supreme of God,
And final cause of all things. But to some
He grants, as proof and earnest of the truth,
Ere yet fate take the tangled skein of time,
And weave it into one surpassing web,
Fit for the glorious garment of our God,
Precedent bliss o'er others. Such be mine ;
While He, the Maker, sole omniscient, knows
The boundless sum of Being and its end.
Fiends ! hear ye me. Why will ye burn for ever ?
Look ! I am here all water : come and drink,
And bathe in me ; baptize your burning souls
In the pure well of life—the spring of God.
I come to save all souls who will be saved.
Come, ye immortal fallen, rise again !
There is a resurrection for the dead,
And for the second dead. And though ye died,
And fell, and fell again, and again died—
There is a life to come, a rise for all ;—
A life to come for ever, and a rise
Perpetual as the spring is in the year.

A Fiend. Thou Son of God ! what wilt thou here
with us ?

Have we not hell enough without Thy presence ?
Remorse, and always strife, and hate of all,
I see around me : is it not enough ?

Why wilt Thou double it with Thy mild eyes ?

Son of God. Spirit ! I come to save thee ?

Fiend.

How may that be ?

Son of God. Repent ! God will forgive thee then ; and I
Will save thee ! and the Holy One shall hallow.
Repent thou, for thy judgment is at hand ;
But if thou slurrest over these means and times,
Which have been given thee for repentance here—
Tremble ! This hell is nothing to thy next.
Believest thou I can save thee ?

Fiend. Son of God!
I do believe it. Let me worship.

Son of God. Come!
Come to me! Lo! I will but touch thy brow,
And make thee bright as morning is in Heaven.

Spirit. Angel of light I am again! Look here!
This—this is to be saved!

Lucifer. I like it not.
Son of God. Hear, ye immortals dead! this I can do.
Repent! and be all angels.

Spirit. Oh, believe!
He is God. Worship Him! He comes to save us.
A lost soul. I, too, who while on earth believed not God
Nor thee, nor Thy divine inwombment, life
Nor death, nor rising, partly by defect
Of nature, partly by self-will, nor Heaven,
Nor hell, nor deathless spirit; but in myself,
And mine own fleshly Being only;—I
Repentant sore, that disbelief condemn,
And glory in a worthier faith. Shall hope
Me visit here?

Son of God. Though in hell's deepest hell
She shall salute thy soul, and I redeem.
Arise!

Soul. Divine one! All the world of life
To thee is debtor; thy supreme command
Thou betterest by example, all forgiving.

Another soul. I, too, by deeds of violence, sins of
soul,
And crimes of head and hand, justly cut off
In fullest fruitage of iniquity,
To save my fellow-men from basest wrongs
Then plotting in my brain, by God all-good,
Repent me of my wickedness; and still
Acknowledging the mercy of the pains
I have so long, so grievously endured,
Dare hope His pardon who hath dealt me power
His justice to confess. Death on my soul
Darted. I died, red-handed in my guilt;
Through woeful ages hath my spirit burned
With expiative remorse and longing vast
Sometime to serve those I on earth had wronged;

Desire that God's divine beneficence
 Would grant me leave to sacrifice for them
 This self I am, this whole essential pang.
 Nor, otherwise, seek I not release from woe.

Son of God. Be of good heart, poor soul! Thou art
 not lost

For aye, assure thyself. Time puts no term
 To God's divinest attributes; to love,
 Compassion, mercy, truth; or time, and time's
 Events would dominate the Eternal mind.

Festus. O Saviour God, of man and angels both
 Divine deliverer, tell me what the doom
 Final of fallen man and angel lost.
 Exceptions or examples these?

Son of God. This know;—
 All things are intermediate; God—His name
 For aye be praised and magnified!—alone
 Is first and last, creation circling midst.
 The pre-existent life of spirit-spheres
 Is that of preparation; on the earth,
 Probation; after death, purgation. All
 Begins, all ends, all mediates sole in God.
 It is just that sin should suffer. It is unjust
 Alike to made and Maker to believe
 The Eternal should a creatural soul invest
 With deathlessness to suffer pain alone;
 No betterment, nor possibility
 Thereof, resultant to the sufferer.
 Such were conditions of pure tyrant rule;
 Birth but a penalty; and mortal life,
 One cruel and continuous curse of God.

Lucifer. But here annihilation is their hope
 Who be not hopeless. How shall aught create
 Sustain the onslaught of the Almighty God?
 Or how, if hell be but His justice, bear
 The wrath of the Omnipotent? Who despair
 And choose to suffer Being, deem nought ends.
 If matter indestructible, then mind.

Son of God. Yea, who can tell the depths of Deity
 That only see its surface creature-wards?
 Their punishment is partly to believe
 Hell's pain perpetual; but it ends.

Lucifer.

Ends?

Son of God.

Ends.

These be the fires whereof, on earth, I spake ;
 Æonian, not eternal ; words to ears
 Adapting. Nought save God Eternal is ;
 In the same sense, as He, or that which speaks
 Union with Him divine. In other mode,
 This purgatory everlasting is ;
 The fires eternal, not the punishment
 On individual soul, or man or fiend ;
 Age lasting, and life lasting such alone ;
 For so long as a man hath lived in sin,
 In wilful wickedness, or contempt of good ;
 So long the spirit suffers for the sense ;
 So long for worst offence he may be racked ;
 Who tempts or wrongs another mulets himself
 In misery he not reckons nor conceives ;
 So long remorse as with a burning wasp
 In venom steeped, shall bite his quivering heart ;
 Till blanched and purified, sin's pantherine spots
 Vanish in whiteness as the wool of lambs.
 But 'gainst unending woe, the love of God
 Towards every soul, once uttered in my blood,
 Heaven's sanctifying sacrifice, avails
 All-covering, and for ever.

Festus.

Son of God !

Thy words are holy, kindly, wise and true ;
 Befitting one who holds communion vast
 With Deity and creature. In Thy breast
 The weakness of all worlds dwells ; on Thy brow
 The glory of their Maker. This we know ;
 The virtues, and all holiest sympathies,
 Preponderating upwards, meet in Heaven,
 And in God's bosom centre. And thus love,
 The heart's deep gulph-stream that with warmer wave
 Sun-gilded, soothes the abysses of our life,
 And tempers, with its mild divinity,
 The universal breath all, partly, breathe ;
 Hasting to compass its celestial end
 With a serene progression, makes us feel
 In loving God the soul reseek its source ;
 Being to being answering, name to name.
 And every evil passion which man's soul
 With flesh engendering, fostered while in life

Becomes in death a living fiend, to scourge
 With patricidal and Briarean hand,
 Its guilty parent, shrinking, shrieking, lost ;
 But, vanquished, grows an angel, pure, transformed,
 Attracting to salvation in the Heavens.

Soul saved. Here, all the ills soul bears are caused by
 sins ;

Their woes are penalties imposed by God ;
 All hallowed be His name, and thrice extolled !
 And each soul suffereth, on its own behalf,
 What proves God's righteous judgment for offence.

Son of God. So faith comports with reason : the less ill
 Men do, less will they suffer. The more good
 Men do to men on earth, the more will God
 Do unto them in Heaven ; for He repays
 Always a hundred, oftentimes thousand, fold.

Soul redeemed. Oh vainly, vainly, from the contrite soul,
 Stabbed with the golden dagger of remorse
 For sin, pours forth the penitential prayer.
 Conscience, enlightened, quickened is soul-fire ;
 Man's self-condemning judgment torturing him ;
 Death were too cheap a pain, man's life a fine
 Too trivial to appease God's proud revenge,
 But for Thine infinite atonement, Lord !—

Festus. Wherefore should all men purge the soul of sin,
 The conscience of all criminal desire ;
 Concupiscence, ire, envy, hatred, sloth ;
 The mind of all perturbing passion ; heart
 Of all propensity which will not bear
 Heaven's fullest, holiest light, whereof by Christ,
 Immortal Mediator of the world,
 Man may become the blessed recipient ;
 And Heaven be full of souls, as air of motes
 Prismatic, the vivacious seed of worlds.

Soul redeemed. Who knoweth this and sinneth, great
 his sin.

Soul saved. But greater towards the sinner is God's love.

Lucifer. It is not that I cannot credit Truth ;
 But that I rather fear, as once of old,
 God hath inspired false prophets with a lie,
 To wreak me further wretchedness. But now
 Stand thou beside me : I will speak to these ;

Or they will sure believe Him. Hell ! O hell !
Powers of perdition ! thrones of darkness !—hear !
Wrath, ruin, torment !—hear me ! It is I.
Thanks, fiends ! I know ye hate me well, and may :
I tempted, ruined, damned ye every one.
Were ye not proud, now, to be conquered by me ?
But wherefore so supine ? Am I, your lord ?
Me do ye doubt ? or dare ye Him believe ?
What is an angel dressed in shiny white ?
Can I not make ye angels ? Ah ! and more :
I cannot make ye less—nor ye yourselves—
Nor God—nor son of God. But hark to me.
Be still, ye thunderblasts and hills of fire !
Hell doth out-din itself.—Hell-hearted slaves !
What are ye that I thus should toil for ye ?
Who hardly earn the fire that burns ye up ?
Power I have proffered, but ye have refused :
Nothing is for ye but your fiery fate.
Kingdoms I have prepared, and ye have spurned.
Slaves ! slaves ! ye are too much at ease. Ye leave
Me single in the work of woe. I, sole,
Go forth to sow destruction : I, alone,
Reap ruin. Had ye been as I, ere now
The universe had been all hell ; and for
A pit, each fiend had had a world to rule.
Rise ! Yet we'll play all hell against all Heaven.
Up ! up ! and then at once we will battle God ;
And hurling each his orb against the throne,
Strange if we will not scatter it like sand,
To reign is nothing half like to dethrone ;
Dethrone ! and each is greater then than God.
And will ye, then, give up your hopes of Heaven,
And entrance as young conquerors fresh from spoil,
And choice of thrones won by your death-red hands,
For pitiful repentance, like him yonder ?
Forbid it, all the prowess, pride, and pain
Of hell that we have borne with ! do ye not ?
Meanwhile man's world is straight to be destroyed.
Be glad ! be glad ! Earth's sons may soon be here.
And here, as earnest of the truth I tell,
Behold this earthling standing by my side !
Speak to them, Festus.

Festus.

Nay, I dread them.

Lucifer.

Speak!

Great spirits! he scarce is worthy to address ye.
In that I cannot say he yet is damned.

Festus. But I am here; what reck's it how or why?
Ye care not and I know not. It is fate:
The will of God and him who sets me here;
And which I question not. It must be good;
Whether decreed that I be saved or lost.
But I have poor pretensions for this place;
And none, I hope, have worse that are to come.
For I have never mocked the word of God,
Nor torn it into fuel for my scorn:
Nor doubted, saving tremblingly, His being;
His love to man—His right to be adored;
Never have hated, never wronged my race,
Deluded nor rejoiced in their delusion:
Never have beckoned off the good from good;
Never have mocked nor scattered hopes—nor e'er
Have wasted hearts, nor desolated hearths;
And if I have once, twice, as who hath not?
Toyed with temptation, yet even he will say
Who standeth there, that I have never given
Up to his burning dalliance my soul.
And yet he is my friend, the Evil one.
And why is wondrous; judge ye wherefore too.
I have no malice, envy, nor revenge;
None of those petty passions which bad hearts
Scourge red into themselves—for passions are
Sufferings—and which to nourish is his want;
Wherein doth lie his power: these I have not.
And, save enjoying earth, I have done never
Aught that he could take part in. But he came
From God, he said, to give; and I believed;—
Great spirits lie not—doubt not.

Lucifer.

He says truth.

But it is not for him nor you to know
The reason of my doings: it is the thing
Unfeared and unforethought which tempts, betrays.
It is I who bait the world to do its will.
As to this mortal, God hath sanctioned all
That I have done, or may do to the end;

Which I have nought to do with. Son of God !
 Go on redeeming ;—I will go on damning.
 God ! go on making ; I will go on marring.
 Go on believing, man !—I go on tempting.
 Saint ! angel ! cherub ! seraph ! and archangel !
 Go ye on blessing ;—I will go on cursing.
 I now retrack my course to earth ; therein
 To work out what remaineth of the fate
 Of this man, and await his world's destruction.
 What next may hap I care not.

Festus.

Let us hence !

Lucifer. Where is he ?

Festus.

There—see ! many do believe.

Orb of perdition ! thou too shalt die out,
 And thy red sheeted flames shall fail for aye.
 Thy palpitating piles of ruin, hot
 With ever-active agony, and quick
 With soul immortal, down whose midnight heights
 The wrath of God in cataracts of fire
 Precipitates itself unceasingly,
 Shall rush into destruction as a steed
 Rushes into the battle, there to die.
 Thy quivering hills of black and bloody hue,
 Death-breathing, shall collapse like lifeless lungs,
 And end in air and ashes. Thou shalt be
 Dashed from creation spark-like from a hand
 Scarless : pass like a rolléd syllable
 Of midnight thunder from the coming day.
 The river of all life, which flows through Heaven,
 Shall yet reach thee and overflow thy flames.
 Thou shalt no more vex God nor man ; nor all
 The seekings of the soul shall hunt thee out.
 Thy day is sometime over. Be it soon !
 And thou the lost world which the world hath lost !

SCENE—*Earth, Midnight : FESTUS and LUCIFER.*

Festus. O starry harp, O harp of Heaven ! once more
 Through midnight's mighty silence the divine
 Vibrations of thy world-strung chords I hear.
 Theirs is the strength of ages. Infant Time
 Smote on them playful : and the eternal toy

Still decks Heaven's æry halls ; emblem to man
 Of worlds attuned to will divine, and soul
 Thankful, from all descent redeemed to God.
 Thou still unchecked and changeless round God's throne
 Dost orbitate perpetual ; sign to us
 Of the resistless compact of those powers,
 Love and necessity, whereto we owe
 Our life and grief ; both sacred. For if here
 Fate be our sovran, in the age to come
 Necessity shall be our thrall ; to her
 We doing lordly homage, one by one ;
 Collectively, her liege. From some far sun,
 Serener than our serpent-coiled orb,
 Whose guilty heart, ghost-haunted, leaps with fear
 At all Faith's innocent spectres as they pass :
 The universal Heaven itself shall shew,
 Rejoicing in perfection infinite,
 The law of life, whereon the world's wide walls
 Are based in heavenly harmonies ; the law
 Of love, whereby all natures howsoe'er
 Fiery or free, obey the mind divine.
 Thou, too, and he who bare thee on his breast,
 By sweet extortion of thy starry strains,
 Didst bow the Hadean powers to yield his bride
 One moment's glimpse of life regenerate : boon
 Of gods, disastrous, then ; though now for us,
 One Holier hath His universal spouse,
 By like descent, effectually redeemed ;
 And blessed with everlasting life in Heaven.

Lucifer. Deeds before words ! But he is sensitive
 Who can, from stars, comfort, though cold, extract,
 And out of fables truth.

Festus. Each hath his star,
 Of weal, perchance, or bale ; but me, oh all
 The Heavens betoken woe !

Lucifer. Ah ! Destiny
 Hath heavy hands, and strong escapeless grasp.
 I half suspect I know what thou wouldst say.
 Say on. I have time enough for other's dole ;
 Let be mine own.

Festus. Bride of my heart ! oh, woe !
 One instant see I thee both quick and dead.

Lucifer. Calm and command thy soul.

Festus.

I will. Allured

By hope-fraught promises thy words inspired
 Of revelations of the light occult,
 Which I in kind reserve, deemed better hid ;
 We with our studious friend at his request,
 Thrice urged, went forth to meet him named by thee
 Sun-seer, but whom the desolate end of all
 Proved rather dread adept of darknesses.
 It was eve, as thou wouldst have, and as we sped
 By wild rough windings through a holy land
 Of solar cult primæval, solemnized
 In prehistoric Eld, the age of fire ;
 They, heart-full of expectancy, and I
 Faithless in aught that might to us conduce
 Of wisdom or of weal,—how Fate confirms
 All saddest premonitions,—deep in thought,
 A hill we reach by moonrise, on whose head,
 Hearselike, a sable grove nodded. 'Twas here
 We waited thee, long time, in vain. We mount ;
 And midway the ascent descend and strike
 A foot-road, forked like a divining rod,
 One branch whereof we track until it bring us
 To a stone of worship, huge and gaunt, which us
 Enshrined within its shadow, to the heart
 Striking its holy chill ; while round its base
 High heaved the land with undulating graves ;
 The moveless wavelets of a sea of death.
 This altar rock thrice circling, hand in hand,
 Still pressing on, breathless, a dell we neared
 Wherein secreted lay a glassy pool,
 Like an enchanted mirror in the breast
 Hid of a dreadful wizard, of all speech
 Disdainful, ere he prove his threatened power ;
 And glowering mid the precipitous cliff opposed,
 A cavern newly yawning in the rock,
 Like that where our first father's sacred clay
 Lay, over which, full many an age elapsed,
 The Heavenly Adam poured his conquering blood
 Beyond all human issue ; over life
 It spreads, like the white river of the skies :
 This but of late discoverable by man,

And save to us unknown. The arch-seer here
Receiving us, as we advanced, withdrew
Inwards; and as we left the outer world,
A blast premonitory caused the groves
Groan o'er our heads: in vain low thunder-peals
Ejaculated just warning. By command
We enter, hapless all, head bared and foot
Naked; and wade a purifying rill,
Which o'er its couch, pale alabaster, veined
With glittering purple, glode. A strait anon,
Jagged and dark, we dragged through and prostrate,
A high-pitched cave where dwelled of old, if sere
Tradition err not, and what wiselier shews?
The prediluvian giants of the land;
Vault upon vault outbranching; not unlike
The cave close bordering on the coasts of Heaven,
Where, in the sub-celestial empire hid
The offended sun his head, till wooed by gods,
And sued by men prostrate, so feign the bards
And bonzes of Zipang—his staff of light
He seized, and reassumed his rolling throne:
Sceptre and staff of light that ere the stars
Were, out of depths chaotic in the hand
Of Heaven's supreme the rocky scum of fire
Stirred, whence arose Life's morning land divine;—
An underworld abysmal excavate
In masonry divine. His hands here smote
The arch-mage, and the thunder of his palms
Re-echoed palpably o'erhead. A gush
Of blinding lightnings shewed us now the roof,
A glimmering void, spar-starred, where travelling lights,
Like planetary seats of social gods,
By art Titanic fulminated into shape,
Self-levered, fabrics of artistic fire,
Mysterious moved; by whose bright art we read
The awful wonders of that uneyed sphere.
Where, as though Nature craved to represent,
In forms of time, eternal histories,
That she the scions of the wise might teach,
In one vast, visible lecture, all to come,
All passed, all present, here insculpt were seen
Wrought out from primal matter nebulous,

As in marmoreal epic, deed by deed,
The marvels of the Omnicausal hand,
And end of man triumphal. Here we viewed
The first essay of force to form in laws
The mountain playthings of the infant Sun.
Here, wrought in stony flames, the age of fire ;
The earth one vast volcano vomiting forth
Her gradual continents and seas of sand ;
Islands extemporizing in a breath.
Grouped there the Preadamic races huge,
Of mastodon and mammoth doomed to swell
Some second chaos with their wreck sublime.
Enormous, and now fabulous, shapes of yore
Cross-peopling all the elements ; wingéd bulls
Star-yoked, that led the morn an endless chase.
Sad gryphon eagle-sired and lion-born ;
Unslumbering gold-ward, jealous of all gems ;
And those commingled births whom Belus smote
Headless, and drowned in gore, his mission here ;
Mild rokh, simorgh, wise sun-spirit ; all these
In amiable converse shewn, or strife,
In lifelike petrifications crowd the walls.
The Heavenly age, the age of Paradise
Here glowed in gold-veined marbles ; darkened sole
By angel treason and the fall of gods ;
Wherewith unconscious earth too sympathized.
Here symbolled by the thousand-branchéd tree,
From whose broad boughs hung constellated gifts,
And every wish delicious of the heart ;
The tree of life there deathless ; but elsewhere
Withered too soon ; and here, with meteor wave
Victorious, o'er the works of God and man
Surging, the all oblitative flood.
And there, too, limned in adamantine lines,
The age of evil, when to angel hands,
To sceptred Sataël, and to Samaël crowned,
Chiefs of the original hierarchies of Heaven
And their base compeers of the mountain oath,
Virtue and leave were given to deluge earth
With woes all natural, shadow and reverse
Of every good gift God had showered on man :
Now checked by pain, or nullified by fine

On every blessing. Swiftly malignant these,
Embittering every element with death,
Taught men the lust of war, beasts thirst of blood ;
Gave reptile, insect, herb, venom ; and poured
In earth's veins poisons mineral ; 'neath the hills
The motive powers of earthquakes rooted ; sowed
Death's seed explosive ; angered air with storms.
These made the hollow columns of the sea
And lofty as the tower of glass that rose
Mid ocean, sudden, by the astounded bark
Of Partholoin's straight-helmed for Ierne's isle ;
Those watery pillars, death-black, that oft burst,
Swollen, nigh ship becalmed on sweltering seas,
Beneath the hot line ; and, ere now, have quenched
The life-light in some fugitive skiff, escaped
Like truant cygnet from its parent sail,
Stealthy, on lawless quest ; in marble here
Portrayed with industry malicious, these,
To man and angel, foes, the lightnings forged,
Which He who owneth all things, after seized,
Wrapped in authentic thunders, and by hands
Angelic, Usdom wracked, with the grim towns
In salt slime sleeping 'neath the sea of death ;
Those, fell disease, contagious pest and plague
These, guileful, taught the craft of sorceries,
Black magic and the dæmon-thralling spells ;
The blood-draught necromantic, and the charms
Whereat the shadowy nations of the dead
Shudder, and flickering upwards to the light
Unfold the soul-sought secret, or convey
Foreboding fatal to the wretch death-doomed.
These in man's heart all evil passions sowed,
And woman's richer and more fertile mould ;
Such snakelike envyings, wolflike jealousies,
As when, for love of fair Khalmanah, Cain
Him slew—since feared as Hades, god of death,
Whom Eva, unhappy mother of mankind,
Beauty of Æden, sinful though revered,
Bewept a hundred years ; so long the dead,
While death was new to earth and life, were mourned ;
These taught the sword to shape, and those the shield,
Bow, poleaxe, spear ; these jewels for the fair,

Brightly seductive ; women were their spoil
From the beginning ; these, and their spurious brood
Gigantic, in whose ears apostate, preached
That patriarch who, accredited of God,
Ambassador to angels, was in Heaven
Received, by death untouched, ere Noah as yet,
With his majestic consort, great Tidea,
Queen-mother of the nations,—deified
After as Vesta or Kybelé, all
Her offspring kings of earth tripartite,—sought
God-warned, the ark, with all their living train.
Instructed by our guide in all we viewed,
Though seen but darkling, and in briefest speech,
Out of the hall of elements slow we passed
Into the fane of life. Here graven the great
And holy war which raged 'twixt earth and Heaven,
Betwixt the pious race and impious tribes,
And microcosmically still in man,
In craggy frieze glared round the orbéd dome.
Here hundred-handed vices, Titan sins,
And giant crimes, seek from the mountain-heart
Of Heaven, the high-throned Thunderer to tear ;
But he, with fiery hail, hurls all to hell ;
Sulphureous remedies there to underlie,
Asbestine ; purifying, blanching woes.
Aurmazd and Ahriman there, in balanced strife,
The doubtful sphere contest ; and here, in stone
Prophetically white, the conquest glad
Of the beneficent Power. Young Orus there,
His sire the sun, his mother mild the moon ;
O sacred night-sun, soul of Heaven, which through
The starry welkin wanderest, in divine
And radiant sorrow seeking for thy Lord,
Him living ne'er thou wilt find ; but lo ! thy son
The evil godhead Typhon slays, and reigns
Wise, silent child of light. Here next, the god,
Incarnate ninefold, crushed with sole divine
To death, and strangled with resistless hand
The snake-god ; holy fiction ! The Ascoors there,
In armed millions by the deities
Vanquished, draw off their whole malignant host,
Destined some day to perish, fiendish sprites ;

But first the tale of their defeat bequeath
In scroll perpetual to these cliff-like walls.
Towards the opposing side our feet we turned.
Here the divine and human wrestled ; there,
Where faith's bright orbit reason's intersects,
The human and angelic ; there, in chair
Of starry state, sate the proud queen, condemned
The everlasting sacrifice to see
Of her pure daughter, like Humanity
Waiting with outstretched arms to be redeemed
By some divine deliverer ; there, with head
Hurled downwards from the topmost height of Heaven,
The righteous but self-glorifying king
Who thought mere merit enough to earn a throne
In God's eternal kingdom ; fatal fault !
Wherefore, as clutching at, with either hand
A world, but grasping nought, serene reproof
He gives to all immortal. Here, hosts terrene,
Celestial, and infernal, armed with faith,
Or infidel fury fought ; these sworn to rase
In ruin, cities reared by hands divine,
Or for like ends ; such even as holy Rome,
Earth's crowning city, whose mysterious sway
Spreads in expansible circles age by age,
From one poor village to the universe ;
Or sacred Troy ; or that built erst of gold,
Men's sins degraded into stone, and now
Debased to clay, but still no whit cognate
To common earth, but of Time's earliest Heaven,
One unadulterate section ; those to defend
Their starry battlements ; their walls inlaid
With purest virtues, and their streets and squares
Paved with celestial wisdom. Here the north,
Icy but strong ; and there the burning south
Led by its passionate queen, contending stood
In fierce and fateful fray ; Death looking on,
Well pleased ; he alway won, whoever lost.
Here nation after nation fought the world
For universal dominance, fought in vain ;
One sole, elect of creatures hath that gift.
Before all, at the end a female form
Gigantic kneeled, dread guardian of the sphere,

Now interceding for its life ; but she,
The fatal sign once given, ordaining death,
Relentless tears the solid universe
Asunder : and on either side, behind,
The final field so feared of old to be
Between the mundane gods and giants fought,
Ere comes the reign of darkness, when with deaths
Commatural, all shall perish. We, our eyes
Edged on the growing blacknesses which now
Mute lightnings lit in mock of light, and now
Blind thunder groped round. Ever and anon,
What spectres seemed, flitted athwart the dark,
But dimly eyeable. Locked hand in hand,
Our fair heroic trembling 'tween her guards,
But firm in spirit as the patriot queen
In golden chains bound Romewards, so to grace
Her victor's triumph, each step doomed to move
Time's ruth, and wrong's eternal recompense ;
We through a long laborious road, rock-arched,
Creep speechless, whence emerging in a cave
Like the green grot where Zeus in secret grew
To stripling godhood, hid from cruel Time ;
Or stalactital palace, subterrene
In Hellas, where the Nine kept secret court,
And crownless ruled o'er kingly servitors ;
We meet with for the first time othersome
Ourselves beside, all silent ; to the voice
Hearkening, of one, in face and form like him
Who first the name of wisdom's lover claimed ;
Heard first of men, Heaven's spherul harmonies ;
At Metapontum wrote upon the moon ;
And at Olympia bared the golden thigh,
In sign of solar lineage ; 'proof supreme.
Listening we stood, charmed ; reassured in faith,
Heartlightened, forth we fared ; and following close
The echoes of our guide's feet, in the heart
Of a dim dome we stood, of sightless bounds,
And named of immortality ; nor far
Our haughty leader found, whose steps we had tracked,
Though deigning commune with us scarcely none,
High on an arch, neath which a torrent foamed,
Red with his torch's glare, bloodlike. Beyond

A mount of awe there loomed, which seemed inspired
With palpitating light ; and, frontwise, shaped
Like to a temple of one solid gem,
Crystalline : thither pointing, Lo the end
Of our emprise ; with these words cut our guide
As with a sword, the silence ; and, Who truth
Would win as she awaits us, in yon shrine,
Burning the victor-soul to satiate
With wisdom, and to crown with life divine
Earthlife, and her embrace Deific give,
Know that to arms untested, hearts untried,
She trusteth nought. Let not yon seething stream,
One, therefore, who would gain such priceless prize,
Affright ; but let the wight content with less
Tread, after, me, the arch. Here quailed she first
Who finally,—but stay. Our student feere,
Bolder than I, plunged reckless in that tide
And struggled nigh to safety, till a rock
Grasping, which loose at base, bewrayed his trust,
And crushed him ; or, that death-flood hurried off
Into earth's caverned darkness and the abyss,
Reverberant alway with its watery roar,
And funeral wail perpetual ; but to me,
Now wading, floundering now, safe transit vouched,
Though sickening to the sense ; nor wist I this
Till scaped, and scanty, from the perilous arch,
Which crumbled as she crossed, nor left retreat,
My love I met, who saw, and fainting, told :—
Told, trembling like the tree whose sense of sin
The ages fail to calm, as shuddering yet
Beneath the pendent God. I heard, dismayed ;
And called his name aloud, which to no end
Unanswerable silence sadly learned ;
Wasted, like time upon unquickened stars.
Now, fiercer, here more urgent, grew the mien
Of our mysterious leader who aloof
Held him, and hailed, as careless of our loss,
Or witless, for his countenance saw we not.
And now, all light snatched from us, on we sped,
We twain, I bearing up her slackening steps,
Amid the ominous darkness of eclipse
And deafening thunders, whence we might opine

Day, egress, nearer than they seemed ; to us
A time of torture ; but determined soon.
Again the light, from out that fane of fire,
Within whose radiant bosom half distent
By smothered splendour, like the sacred side
Of Athyr, when in travail of the sun,
Blew, flowerlike, open ; and with arrowy glance
Showed us one only feat to consummate.
From out that lofty shrine of roseate glow,
And twixt the stops of stormy thunders now
Voices and harps, and far faint harmonies
We list extatic, as though deadliest Fate
Would masque it faery-wise. Here each one's foot
Instinct with caution, easy seemed ascent ;
Nor either paused, until the brink we touch
Unseen, till lit on, of a torrent chasm,
Sacred in use, not to be worded. There,
But on the thither side, our sun-seer stood,
Who gazed that orb nor blinked ; for on his side,
New risen upon the summer's narrow night,
Sheer through a mountain fissure shone the Sun.
The chasm, as we neared now, behold the ground
As though on rolling hinges nether-hidden,
Slode, crabwise ; and methought, nay, could it be ?
The temple, where against our leader leaned,
Tottered as though deliberant or to stand
Or fall. One moment more than sated sight.
For ah ! a shriek I heard ; and turning, viewed,
Slow sinking with the slab whereon she stood,
Down irrecoverably, down the abyss
My loved one, like a sacrifice to night.
Glory and joy of life, creation's crown,
Now lost ; already do I feel the weight
Of woes prospective. Therefore's time's broad stream
Flows o'er thine end in silence, hides thy doom.
To Heaven she raised her finger, and was gone.
Nor saw I, nor aught knew, distinctly, more.
Save, that in springing upwards for mere life,
That vast substructure, all mescemed was blent
With earth's interior chaos ; and I passed,
The mysteries now in mystery all inwombd,
For aye, and ne'er to be by me resought,

Clear through the death-rift into Heavenly day;
 For spirits are born upwards, while in time,
 As by Cæsarian birth. The orient Sun
 Head of the house of Heaven, the Sire of days;
 The manifestive light, the lord of joy,
 Saluting prostrate, I beheld; and lo!
 As when in sight the axe, some wrongous wretch
 Fear-urged, confesseth, but one murderous deed,
 Still unsuspect, keeps back, and with a groan
 And grinding shudder locks it in his breast;
 Nor leaves his lips scarce room to vaunt of breath;
 So earth, that fatal fissure with a crash
 Closing, beheld I hide her deathful deed.
 Thou speakest not.

Lucifer. I have nothing to observe,
 The quest of knowledge is man's deadliest pride;
 And me nor pride, nor death, surpriseth now.

Festus. 'Twain of my best supports my heart hath lost;
 As though the earth should miss twin elements.

Lucifer. These things were doubtless fixed before all
 time;
 Coæval with the atoms.

Festus. Mystery
 That is—accounts for mystery. Tell me this;
 How is it I feel all freedom in myself
 And yet necessity? When most with God
 My mind, then most constrained by law divine.
 Say, wert thou free at first, or didst thou win
 By force of sin alone free solitude?
 If thus, then is not freedom a defect?

Lucifer. Creation is the simplest tale on earth.
 All things are perfect relatively. In God's
 Forecounsel for amendment is no room;
 Nor things self-bettered. Stars grow not in his hand
 From fabulous Chaos. Needs not He to learn
 By slow degrees to separate elements
 From jumbled contraries. The Heavenly spheres
 Shew not as shapeless lumps on rumbling roads
 Time scarce hath time to level ere their end;
 But bright and glib from the creative hour,
 Both orb and orbit to each other apt,
 All life intelligent admires; and knows

Omniscient mind needs not experience lore.
 Him can events instruct, who all events
 Foreorders to their end? Nor yet with Him
 Who for His own good pleasure hath all made,
 All life pervades, perpetuates and conducts,
 Lieth necessity, more than freedom. These
 On the created spirit alone can act.
 As every living thing on earth sustains
 Unconscious, weight enorme of aery leagues,
 Their inner life-power thus enabling them,
 So by the force of freedom self-conceived,
 The spatial pressure of necessity
 Man bears with equal mind, as paired with Fate,
 And inwardly divine. So I with him.

Festus. How then should spirits e'er alter from their
 first

To worse? or how, if worse, be e'er restored?

Lucifer. Faith, and the loss of faith alone decides.

Festus. Mystery, more mystery. Write that word at
 large,

And tell me it includes all tongues, all signs.
 Speak of the first fall.

Lucifer. All was peace in Heaven
 When God to the assembled angels shewed
 His future ends towards man, not yet create.
 Some, I and mine, His wisdom in that end
 First doubt; and as we doubted, a dim film,
 Shadowy, o'erspread the spirit; and we felt
 Dark, and first knew ourselves diverged from God,
 Excentric to the universal soul;
 First knew Ill's relative existence; knew
 The universal strife which should pervade
 Creation, then begun, which we were doomed
 To wage for aye; its final cause, and how
 To be transformed and righted and made ground
 Of greater glory, knew not; of that end
 Still dubious, our conclusive ignorance,
 In common with Creation of the mode
 And reason to that endwards being a curse,
 Inevitable seeming save by death.
 But how, immortal, die? Ere yet one act
 Had faintest thought interpreted, o'er Heaven

Fell down a volumed darkness, night of night,
 Thick as a thousand palls, were earth the bier;
 For God upon His throne had frowned. When fled
 The blackness of that strangeness, lo! we stood
 Who erred, disjoined by line impalpable
 But ah! impassable, from all in Heaven.
 The seed of sin expanded, as thought swift,
 As love light. Self in lieu of God remains;
 In all their souls who sin, self, deified.
 Evil is multitudinous. God is one.
 But though the sum of evil in myself
 Not whole or absolute Ill, I: for to live
 Is of itself a predicate divine;
 Good of a high condition; and to be,
 Proves my existence drawn with all from God.
 Proceed we therefore to the future. Though
 Racked with undying pain still pain must end,
 As born of life create, though life, too, cease.
 Eternal nought is, nought can be; save God.
 Though how Creator's glory reconcile
 With all creation's sin, save those His grace
 Sustains perforce in Heaven, 'twere wise to leave
 In His hands; since nor thou nor I need say.
 And now, Time threatens to forestall our course.
 Wilt do a message for me?

Festus. Aught that may

Ease and divert my mind.

Lucifer. True; I had forgot.

Seek then the fair Elissa; and with her
 Confer from time to time,—some time 'twill need—
 Upon thy coming ends long hoped, which she
 May sanction, perchance aid. Go, waste no words.
 Improve thy welcome.

Festus. I want something new.

Lucifer. Hence! I assure thee pleasant company;
 More so than thine; bright future and—

Festus. I go.

Guardian Angel. Yes, go. But I unseen attend thee,
 yet

To warn 'gainst cruel sin; mayhap to save.
 Not even he doth know that I am here.

Lucifer. Thus to dissemble suits me; me reminds

Of whilome triumphs. Well wots the world ere now,
That I have starred it in an ampler stage.

Festus. Now, though I do what I desire, or fail,
Each were not less an evil.

Lucifer. Nature, friend,
Is given to man to conquer.

Festus. But alas!
Not yet can we o'ercome our nature, here,
Would we.

Lucifer. If, therefore, passion strike the heart,
Let it have length of line, and plenteous play;
The safety of superior principles
Lies in exhaustion of the lower ones,
However vast or violent.

Festus. Such a thought
Stands in the way of nothing; not even man.

SCENE.—*A Drawing Room.*

FESTUS, ELISSA, and LUCIFER.

Festus. Who says he loves and is not wretched, lies;
Or that love is madness, came mad from his mother.
It is the most reasonable thing in nature.
What can we do but love? It is our cup.
Love is the cross and passion of the heart;
Its end—its errand. In the name of God,
What made us love, Elissa?

Elissa. I know not.
I am not happy. I have wept all day.

Festus. 'Twas thine own fault. What wouldst thou
have of me?

I tell thee we must—no, I cannot tell thee.
I cannot bear those tears. Thou knowest I love thee;
Worship thee; oh! it's a world more than worship,
The cold obedience which we give to God.
Elissa! turn to me!

Elissa. I cannot. Go!—

Festus. Thou hadst no need no business to have loved
me.
One loved thee well.

Elissa. I could not help his loving
Me, nor my loving thee. It was our fate.

Festus. Then fate hath fee'd the passion for our death,
And we are sold.

Elissa. Well! Let us die together.
Together we will quit our bodies here.

Festus. Together will we go to God and judgment.

Elissa. Festus! I will, I can love none but thee.

Festus. Thou must not.

Elissa. But I must. I cannot help it.
Look at me—heart and arms, I am thine own.
Thou knowest I am and have been. Wilt not love me?
Festus! mine own and only! wilt thou not?
Have I done nothing, suffered and abandoned
Nothing for thee? Oh! I was happy once;
Ere I knew thee. Why wast thou kind to me?
Cruelly kind—or this had never been.
But now thou mayst be cruel if thou wilt.
Hate me! still I am thine: disown me, thine!
Desert me! no—thou canst not. I am thine;
I am—look at me, Festus! look at me;
I am half blind with weeping; and mine eyes
Have not a tear left in them. But I know
How it will end. Thou wilt leave me as I am—
Loveless and lonely.

Festus. Nay, not so; my love
Shall aye be with thee, and my soul with both.
But we must part! Think that I come again.

Elissa. Not be again with thee—nor thou with me!
It is too much. Let me go mad or die.

Festus. Live, mine Elissa! and thou shalt live with me;
And I will love thee ever as I now love.
Wilt thou?

Elissa. Oh! make me happy! say I may
Believe thee.

Festus. May? Thou must.

Elissa. Say it again.
I cannot know too often of my bliss.
But dost thou love me? tell me—wilt thou love me?

Festus. Since I have known thee I have done nought
else.

All hours not spent with thee are blanks between stars.
I love thee! love thee! love thee! madly love thee!
Oh! thou hast drank my heart dry of all love!

It will be empty to aught after thee.

Come, dry thine eyes. Blessings on those sweet eyes!

By Heaven! they might a moment win the glance

Of any seraph gazing not on God.

Elissa. No wonder they drew thine. There is a tear!

Festus. Ay; strange and startling is the first hot tear
That we have shed for years; and which hath lain
Like to a water-fairy in the eye's

Blue depths—spell-bound in the socket of the soul.

Death brought it not—pain brought it not—nor shame;

Nor penitence—nor pity—nor despair:

Nothing but love could. For a fearful time

We can keep down the floodgates of the heart,

But we must draw them sometime; or it will burst

Like sand this brave embankment of the breast,

And drain itself to dry death. When pride thaws—

Look for floods.

Elissa. Now, thou wilt be very kind
When next we meet? Our time will soon be gone.

Festus. I cannot think of time:—there is no time!

Time! time! I hate thee—with the hate of hell

For aught that's good—but thou art infamous.

I will give thee half my immortality

To keep back for one hour. Leave me, to-night;

And wither me, to-morrow, like a weed.

Elissa. Where is he now?

Festus. In hell,—I hope.

Elissa. What mean'st thou?

He wronged thee never. Say, when cometh he?

Festus. To-night.

Elissa. He comes to sever us, like fate.

But shall he part us?

Festus. Never! Let him part

The sun in two first.

Elissa. It was ever thus:

I am made to make unhappy all around me.

Festus. I will not hear of thy being wrong,—it is I.

I am the false usurper. And since one

Out of the three must be a sacrifice,

Let it be me. It shall be.

Elissa. Thou didst swear,

Even now, to love me ever.

Festus.

Be it so.

I have sworn—and now and then I keep my oath—
I will not give thee up, so save me God!

Elissa. Oh! we have been too happy, have we not?
But, now I think of it, we might have known
It could not last. Woe follows bliss as close
As death does life—as naturally, may be.
We might have thought—

Festus.

I never thought about it.

My love—Elissa! ah, how cold thy hand is!
Here—warm it on my heart. Nay, let it be.
The hand that is on the heart is on the soul.
And it is thus some moments take the wheel,
And steer us through eternity. Believe me,
Could I but crowd life, love too, in one throb,
I would beat it out, this moment, in thy hand,
And would die blessing.

Elissa.

Give me back my hand!

Festus. My sweet one! if this heart hath warmed thy
hand,

It hath not beaten in vain—it but returns
A pleasure, and a passion, and a power :
For oft at touch of thine this bosom burns.
Speak to me! keep my name upon thy lips,
Steeped in their rosy star-dew, there where now
Dwells the sweet soul of silence unexpressed,
Possible music; hither turn those eyes,
Within whose glowing depths one streaming star,
Ascendant of the soul, holds radiant rule
And full-orbed dominance, that mine may share
Their dear translated light; oh! let that cheek,
Just tinged as with the echo of a blush,
Pale as the sumptuous bosom of a rose,
Which else might vie with snow; that crescent-brow
Beaming with soul-light, oh! incline to mine!—
Nay, do not weep. We never trust your tears.
Tears, like the spirits in a magic glass,
Wait on the witchery of fair woman's will.

Elissa. Wrong me not thus. The end of love is woe,
And of woe death, and of death, death alone.
And there is no redemption for the heart.

Festus. Love hath no end except itself. We only
Felt we loved and were happy.

Elissa. Ah! It was so.
Our sole misfortune is, we have been happy :
We never shall be happy here again.

Festus. Nay, say not so. Let us be happy now.
Happy? To fling aside thy wavy locks,
And feed mine eyes on thy white brow—to look
Deep in thine eyes till I feel mine have drank
Full of that soft wet fire which floats in thine—
Eyes which I ne'er would leave—yet when most near,
Then most astray I—oh! to lay my cheek
Upon thy sweet and swelling bosom thus ;
Where midst upon the beauty of thy breast
Sits Love, like one between the cherubim—
To crop the red budding kisses from thy lips—
To name thee, make thee, but one moment, mine—
Delights me more than all that earth can lend
The good or bad—or Heaven can give the saved.
One long wild kiss of sunny sweets, till each
Lack breath, the lips half bleed, and come—thou knowest!
I ask but one such—let it last for ever!

Elissa. Now, Festus! this is wrong.

Festus. What?—what is wrong?
Shall my blood never bound beneath beauty's touch,
Heart throb, nor eye thaw with hers—when her tears
Drop, quick and bright, upon the glowing brow
Plunged in her bosom—because, forsooth, it is wrong?
Let it be wrong! it is wrong, it is wretchedness
That I would lose both sense and soul to suffer.

Elissa. How dare we love each other as we do?

Festus. Give me some wine! more—more, love!

Elissa. Drink and drain
The bowl! the vintage of a hundred years
Would never slake the memory of shame;
Nor quench the thirst of folly.

Festus. Fill again!
My beauty! sing to me, and make me glad.
Thy sweet words drop upon the ear as soft
As rose-leaves on a well: and I could listen,
As though the immortal melody of Heaven
Were wrought into one word—that word a whisper,
That whisper all I want from all I love.

Elissa. I am not happy, and I cannot sing.
Thou lookest happy. I wish I were so.

Festus. They tell us that the body of the sun
Is dark, and hard, and hollow; and that light
Is but a floating fluid veiling him.
Ah! how oft, and how much, the heart is like him!
Despite the electric light it lives and hides in.

Servant (entering). A singer who was told to come is
here.

Festus. Wilt hear him?

Elissa. Yes, love, gladly.

Festus. Shew him in.

What have you there?

Singer. Oh! I think, everything.

Festus. Well, anything will be enough this once.
The last new song?

Singer. Certainly; here it is. [*Sings.*

Oh! let not a lovely form
With feeling fill thine eye;
Oh! let not the bosom warm
At love-lorn lady's sigh—
For how false is the fairest breast;
How little worth, if true;
And who would wish possessed,
What all must scorn or rue?
Then pass by beauty with looks above;
Oh! seek never—share never—woman's love!

Oh! let not a planet-like eye
Imbeam its tale on thine;
In truth 'tis a lie—though a lie
Scarce less than truth divine.
And the light of its look on the young
Is wildfire with the soul;
Ye follow and follow it long,
But find nor good nor goal.
Then pass by beauty with looks above;
Oh! seek never—share never—woman's love!

Elissa. Methinks I must have heard that voice before.

Festus. And I.

Elissa. Where?

Festus. I forget.

Elissa. And so do I.

Singer. Oh! let not a wildering tongue
Weave bright webs o'er thine ear;
Nor thy spirit be said nor sung
To the air of smile or tear.

And say it hath melody far
 More than the spheres of Heaven,
 Though to man and the morning star
 They sang, Ye be forgiven !
 Yet pass by beauty with looks above ;
 Oh ! seek never—share never—woman's love !
 Oh ! let not a soft bosom pour
 Itself in thine ! It is vain.
 Love cheateth the heart, oh ! be sure,
 Worse even than wine the brain.
 Then snatch up thy lip from the brim,
 Nor drain its dreamlike death :
 For love loves to lie down and dim
 The bright soul with his breath.
 Then pass by beauty with looks above
 Oh ! seek never—share never—woman's love !

Festus. Come hither, man ! I wish to look at thee
 A moment. No ! it can't be. Yet I have seen
 Some one much like thee.

Elissa. It was a brother, may be ?

Singer. I have none, lady. Have ye done with me ?

Festus. Yes—go ! and we will take your song of you.

Elissa. No ! stay at present ! sing again, I prithee.

Festus. Sing something burning, passionate, and sweet ;
 For I am in the mood to realize
 All deep and dear enjoyment. Trill away !
 The lilt perchance may dovetail with the time.

Singer. Thou art for happiness with me .
 Love, love me as thou wilt !
 I care not, so I live with thee,
 For goodness or for guilt.
 I leave repentance to the weak,
 And to the good all gladness :
 I only feel, that while I speak,
 Reason to me seems madness.
 This heart at once went wild for thee,
 While yet thou wert not mine ;
 And now thine eye is law to me—
 Law human and divine.
 I leave despair to all who fail,
 Who love and lose thee, sadness ;
 For what 'gainst beauty can avail,
 Which, moon-like, maketh madness ?

Is this sufficient ?

Festus. Ample ; excellent.

Servant.

Here, follow me !

[*They go.*

Festus. Weeping again, my love?
 Thou art, by turns, the proudest and the humblest
 Creature I ever met with. The least thing
 Dints thy soft heart. Come, cheer thee, sweet one—do!
 Oh! if to say, I love, laid all the sins
 Of all the worlds upon me, I would say it
 Till I were out of breath: and will, till I die.

Elissa. If love be blind, it must be by his tears;
 For love and sorrow alway come together—
 Love with his sister, sorrow, by the hand.

Festus. Nay, I will conquer thee again to smile,
 Or lose my right to love thee. Let me kneel!
 Come! I will have no other gods but thee;
 To none but thee will I bow down and worship;
 Thy bosom is mine altar—and thine eyes
 Are the Divinity that preys upon me.
 Oh! cruel as the week-day gods of old;
 Thou wilt have human victims; not content
 With tears and kisses—fire and water—thou
 Wilt have the subtler element of life;
 Thou needs must live on immortality!
 Here—take me then! I offer up myself
 A sacrifice to thee.

Elissa. Thou foolish boy!
 Where will thy passionate folly end? I love thee.

Festus. Well then, let me conjure thee; let me swear
 By some sweet oath that shall to both be holy:
 By arms which hold, by knees which worship thee;
 By that dark-eye, the dark divine of beauty,
 Yet trembling o'er its lid all tears and light—
 Glory and eye of eyes which yet have shone;
 By this lone heart which longeth for a mate;
 By love's sweet will, and sweeter way; by all
 I love—by thyself, myself; let me, let me,
 Let me—but draw the lightning from thine eye:—
 Kisses are my conductors: do not frown:
 Nor look so temptingly angry. I was but trifling.
 The cold calm kiss which cometh as a gift,
 Not a necessity, is not for me,
 Whose bliss, whose woe, whose life, whose all is love.

Elissa. We both wrong whom we love, love whom we
 wrong.

Festus. But I am as a dog that fondles o'er
And licks the wound he dies of. Would I could
Suffer or feel enough of love to kill!

Elissa. Thou lovest one whom thou oughtst not to love.

Festus. And what of that? Love hath its own belief—
Own worship—own morality—own laws :
And it were better that all love were sin
Than that love were not. It must have bye-laws—
Exceptions to the rules of earth and Heaven ;
For it means not the good it doth nor ill.

Elissa. It is wrong—it is unjust—unkind.

Festus. It is.

But I am half mad and half dead with it.
I have loved thee till I can love nought beside.
My heart is drenched with love as with a cloud.
I have too much of life that I scarce can live.
I hate all things but thee—shun men like snakes—
Women, like pits. To me thou art all woman—
All life—all love, and more than all my kind.
I love thee more than I shall love and look for
Death if he takes thee from me. But who dreams
Of death and thee together ?

Elissa. I do oft :

And as oft wish dreams would, for once, come true.
The best of all things are dreams realized.

Festus. Dreams such as gods may dream thy soul
possess

For ever in the Hadeän Eden—Death :
But bless thy lover with reality !
Then, thou shalt live for ever, and with me.
I have gone round the compass of all life,
And can find nought worthy of thee. I but feel,
That were I—as I ought to be—a god,
I would just sacrifice the sun to thee,
In bright and burning honour of thy love.
Miracles are not miracles with gods.

Elissa. Dearer thou canst not be to me, unless
I die in telling how dear.

Festus. My Elissa !

I—I am bewildered : open but thy arms !
And make me happy and all wise of thee.
My soul is stung with thy beauty to the quick.

Oh! but thou art too good, or else too bad :
Be colder or be warmer!

Elissa.

Leave me!

Festus.

Well:

It is most cruel—first, to light the heart
With love completely—boundlessly; and then,
Moonlike, slowly to edge aside, and leave
One only little line of all so bright,
Once;—teach and unteach—nay, to use more arts
Than would outdo the devil of his throne,
To make us ignorant of all we know :
To take the heart to pieces carefully—
For it is love alone can build the heart—
To root the tree up 'neath whose shade we have lived,
And give us back a sliver. Let it die!

Elissa. Hark! he is coming.

Festus.

No! He cannot come;

For I have driven an oath into his heart,
And I have hung a curse about his neck,
Might sink the prince of air into the centre.

Elissa. All I have done, I have done to save ourselves

Festus. Then let us perish! But unless we sin—

Elissa. We cannot perish.

Festus.

What is sin to me?

I reckon not of it. Forgiven before I sinned;
Pardoned ere yet existent; justified
By God's eternal act and immanent;
I fear not sin of other, nor mine own;
Atoned for, all. Predestined faith supplants
All virtues, all defects supplies.

Guardian Angel.

Beware!

O I beseech thee. Nay, he hears me not,
More than the sigh of land-locked gale, by states,
Severed from storm-lashed seas, is heard amidst
The foamy turmoil.

Festus. Have! Have! cries a voice,
As of a crowd within me. I would do aught
To throw this dark desire which wrestles with me.
It answers not to hold it at arms-length:
It must be hurled, dashed, trampled down.—I can't.
Lady! how long am I to love thee thus?
Never did angel love its Heaven—nor king
Crown, as I thee.

Elissa. I feared how it would end.
 Can nothing less than sinning sate the soul?
 Can nothing but perdition serve to nest
 Our hearts after so sweet a flight of love?

Festus. The might and truth of hearts is never shown
 But in loving those whom we ought not to love—
 Or cannot have. The wrong, the suffering is
 Its own reward.

Elissa. Let me not wrong thee, Festus.
 Let me not think I have thought too well of thee.
 Be as thou wast! What will become of us?

Festus. Be mine! be me! be aught but so far from
 me!

Give me thyself! It is not enough for me
 That I have gazed and doted on thee till
 Mine eye is dazzled and my brain is dizzied:
 Thou must exhaust all senses; not enough
 That in long dreams my soul hath spread itself
 Like water over every living line
 Of this sweet make, dreaming thou wast all lips;
 Nor that it now sinks in the face of thee,
 Like a sea-sunset, hot and tired with the long,
 Long day of love;—it is not enough. I must
 Have more—have all! For I have sworn to fill
 Mine arms with bliss—thus—thus—thus!

Elissa. *Festus!*

Lucifer (entering). Friend!

Did ye not know me? It was I who sang.

Elissa. It was he!

Festus. Thou—

Lucifer. Hush! thou art not to utter what
 I am. Bethink thee; it was our covenant.

Festus. Saved from myself as though against my will
 Oh what a mountain-cloud rolls from my heart!
 Where art thou, angel-guard, that I may give
 Thee thanks, if due, for life saved from remorse,
 And sin's soul-blinding sophistries?

Guardian Angel. O man!

Not to me, duty only done, give grace.
 But in the mercy granted thee, rejoice;
 Rejoice, and comfort her who needs it sore,
 But will not need it long.

Festus. Watch o'er me still.

Guardian Angel. All that is ought, I will. Farewell !

Festus.

And thou !

Lucifer. Thee once again I said that I would see.

Elissa. Thou didst : and I must thank thee.

Lucifer.

Hear me now !

Thou knowest well what once I was to thee :

One who for love of one I loved—for thee—

Would have done or borne the sins of all the world :

Who did thy bidding at thy lightest look ;

And had it been to have snatched an angel's crown

Off her bright brow as she sat singing, throned,

I would have cut these heartstrings that tie down,

And let my soul have sailed to Heaven, and done it—

Spite of the thunder and the sacrilege,

And laid it at thy feet. I loved thee, lady !

I am one whose love was greater than the world's,

And might have vied with God's : a boundless ring,

All pressing on one point—that point thy heart.

And now—but shall I call on my revenge?—

It is at hand in armies. Thou art woman ;

And that is saying the best and worst of thee.

I know that vengeance is the part of God :

And can make myself almighty for the moment.

For what ? for nothing. Thou art utter nothing.

Thus it was always with me when with thee ;

And I forget my purpose and my wrongs,

In looking and in loving. But I hate thee.

To say that thou didst love me ! Curse the air

That bore the sound to me ! Forgive me, God !

If I blaspheme, it is not at Thee, but her.

I'd not believe her were she saved in Heaven !

There is no blasphemy in love but doubt ;

No sin, but to deceive.

Festus.

Then is she sinless.

She loved thee first—then me. What wouldst thou more ?

Thy heart's embrace, though close, was snake-like cold ;

And mine was warm, and what is more was welcome.

Lucifer. Patience ! I spake not, cared not, thought
not, of thee.—

Now I forgive thy having loved another ;

And I forgive—but never mind it now ;

I have forgiven so much, there is nothing left

To make more words about : but for the future,
 I will as soon attempt to entice a star
 To perch upon my finger ; or the wind
 To follow me like a dog, as think to keep
 A woman's heart again. Answer me not.
 Let me say what I have to say and go.
 'Thou art all will and passion ; that is thine
 Excuse and condemnation.

Elissa. While that will
 Was love to thee, I saw no harm, nor thou.
 And if my heart hath gained, it was not I
 Who put it on—nor could help it going wrong.

Lucifer. Oh ! I have heard, what rather than have
 heard
 I would have stopped mine ears with thunder : words
 That have gone singing through my soul, like arrows
 Through the air.

Elissa. I never will defend myself.
 For I despise defence like accusation—
 And now look down on them and thee together.

Lucifer. Now let us part, or I shall die of wrath.
 Be my estrangement perfect as my love !

Elissa. Part then !

Lucifer. Thank God it is for eternity !

Elissa. I do. Away !

Lucifer. Festus ! I wait for thee.
 I have fulfilled the word between us passed,
 So far as is permitted me. Look back :
 There is little unaccomplished.

Festus. One thing yet.

Lucifer. And that mayhap anon. Wouldst rather
 power
 To sow in millions or in units reap ?

Festus. Spirit, beyond compute, beyond compare,
 Both I must have.

Lucifer. So then this womanly love,
 Brain-feebling, heart-unmanning sentiment,
 Must be put by, which is to neither gain,
 Honour nor need. We have had enough of love ;
 A wild and wildering passion at the best.
 True, it hath served a purpose with myself ;
 Although constrained the very thing to avert

All forecast had led up to. Nor in this
Seemed I myself, quite.

Festus. Well, I will think of it.

Lucifer. It is thought and said; and I will lead thee
where

Thou shalt perceive earth spirit-wise, and know
All nature tributary.

Festus. That were well.

But come, thou art not the first deceived in love;
Yet love is not so much love as a dream,
Which hath, it seems, like guerdon with the thing—
The staring madness when we wake and find
That what we have loved, must love, is not that
We meant to love. Perhaps I profited
Too much by thy good lessons.

Lucifer. Lady! ere
I hence, grant yet one favour. Take this rose
Fresh from its parent stem; make much of it;
And as it fades, let all remembrance fade
Of him who gave.

Elissa. I cast it down at once.
The eagle needs no omens who himself
Is to all ominous; and not with me
Shall memory like a whirlpool 'neath a fall,
Whose watery resurrection scares the bold,
Revolve the mangled moments of the passed
In wearisome dissolution; no! at once—

Lucifer. The furies hint it and the fates advise
Like that! well, let it perish.

Festus. Go, I follow.

Lucifer (going). Now therefore would I wager, and I
might,
The great archangel's trump to a dog-whistle,
That whatsoever happens, worse ensues.

Festus. Forgive me love, for having brought this on
thee!

Elissa. The love which giveth all, forgiveth aught.
And thou art more to me than earth or Heaven.
They have but given life: thou gavest me love,
The lord of life—thou my life, love, and lord!
Take me again, my kindest—dearest—best!
Him who hath gone I never loved like thee.

There was a desolation in his eye
 I could not brook to look on; for it seemed
 As though it ate the light out of mine own.
 I think that thou dost love me.

Festus. And I think,
 For perfect love there should be but one god—
 One worshipper.

Elissa. We know the gods of old
 Worshipped each other—equal deities.
 For the sweet poets surely spake the truth
 About the gods; they dare not speak but truth.

Festus. Who but thyself would speak of poetry,
 While thou art by? who art the very breathing
 Beauty which bards may seek ideally.
 And dost thou, then, believe the gods of old—
 Those toys and playthings of an infant world?

Elissa. If I do not believe, I do not scorn them.
 Nay, I could mourn for them and pray for them,
 I can scorn nothing which a nation's heart
 Hath held, for ages, holy: for the heart
 Is alike holy in its strength and weakness:
 It ought not to be jested with, nor scorned.
 All things, to me, are sacred that have been.
 And though earth, like a river, streaked with blood,
 Which tells a long and silent tale of death,
 May blush her history and hide her eyes,
 The passed is sacred—it is God's: not ours.
 Let her and us do better if we can.

Festus. There are whole veins of diamonds in thine eyes,
 Might furnish crowns for all the Queens of earth.
 Oh! I could sooner set a price on the sun,
 My love, than on thy lightest look. Look on me
 Speak! if it only be to say thou wilt not.
 Look! I would rather look on thee, one minute,
 Than paradise, for a whole day—such days
 As are in Heaven. I love thee more and more.

Elissa. To love, and say we love—to suck the sting
 Out of the heart, and put its poison on
 The tongue.

Festus. Yet it is a luxury to feel
 Inflamed—to glow within ourselves, like fire-opals.
 Now, stay thy pretty little tuneful tongue,

Nor silver o'er thy syllables. They will not
 Pass. No, not one more word. I must away;
 I have stayed too long already, for my word.
 But say, what wilt thou? what dost fear?

Elissa. I dread

But too long separation; nothing else.

Festus. Would I could more assure thee than by words!

Elissa. When Heaven and earth were first betrothed,
 they brake

The rainbow 'tween them as a ring, for each
 A part, in token of their trothplight, till
 Their sacred bridals, when both fragments oned,
 It shall conclude the eternal covenant.

Festus. Here have I fixed my rest. It may not be
 That one shall compass all the ends he hopes,
 Which are in gift of hands Divine alone;
 But for the mightiest destiny which e'er
 Awaited man, I spurn it for thy sake,
 And would renounce the crown of earth; for me,
 The world may go a begging for a king.

Elissa. I fear me that the love of power is more
 Than all the power of love, and so might prove,
 Wert thou, too, tried,

Festus. Till then 'twere well to trust.
 But I have heard the call I must obey,
 And seen the nod of all compelling fate.
 It hastens me away.

Elissa. And am I nothing?
 Who masters not his fate is weak indeed.

Festus. What if by serving thee I vanquish mine?
 We are the lords of our own destiny—
 Our own fates, furies, graces. All the gods
 Are we unto ourselves, because we love.

Elissa. Tremble! thou utterest treasonable truth
 Against the dead Divinities.

Festus. But who
 Shall reconcile their powers, or who avenge
 Their slighted worship?

Elissa. God! for the Divine
 Of old, though dimly, was as now adored.
 The day of all negations now is closed,
 The primal affirmation is confirmed.
 What sins against the sense divine, and most

Of all things pride, God alway punisheth
With death or madness.

Festus. Nay, convert me quite.
Thou art at heart a Pagan.

Elissa. I am one
In whose free faith the truth, whate'er, is holy,
And what is good is sacred.

Festus. I am too.

Elissa. I cannot part with thee; nay, sit again!
Parted from thee I feel like one half riven,
And my soul acheth to spring to—as thus!

Festus. There! let me leave, love! let me loose these
arms.

Another time and, ah! well—never mind!
We shall be happier—yes, I know we shall.
Thou hast been mine—thou art mine—and thou shalt be!
My parting gift thou will not, sweet, refuse,
Nor would I proffer aught which emblem'd less
Than life celestial and the light Divine.
Expect me ere it wither; ere the scent,
Sweet effluence of its perfectness of leaf,
Hath fled its starry censer, look for me.
Let the death-destined perish. We shall live.

Elissa. My life is one long loving thought of thee.
If any ask me what I do, I could say
I love, and that is all.

Festus. It is enough.
One kiss! another! one more—there! farewell!

Elissa. And he is gone! and the world seems gone
with him.

Shine on, ye Heavens! why can ye not impart
Light to my heart? Have ye no feeling in ye?
Why are ye bright when I am so unhappy?
But oh! I would not change my woes for thrice
The bliss of others, since they are, love, for thee.
Our very wretchedness grows dear to us,
When suffering for one we love. Sweet stars!
I cannot look upon your loveliness
Without sadness, for ye are too beautiful;
And beauty makes unhappy: so men say.
Ye stars! it is true—we read our fate in ye.
Bright through all ages, are ye not happy there?
With years, many as your light-rays are ye not

Immortal? Space-pervading, oh! ye must be,
 Spirit-like, infinite. All-being God!
 Who art in all things, and in whom all are!
 And it is thus we worship Thee the most;
 When heart to heart with one we love we are gods;
 Let us believe that if Thou gavest earth
 For our bodies, then the stars were for our souls;
 For perfect beauty and unbounded love.
 Let us believe they look upon us here
 As their inheritors, and save themselves
 For us, as we for Thee, and Thou for all.

SCENE—*The Sun.*

FESTUS; *afterwards* LUCIFER, ANGELA, OURIEL, GUARDIAN
 ANGEL.

Festus. Soul of the world, divine Necessity,
 Servant of God, and master of all things!
 Here, in the Heaven of Light's eternal noon,
 First see I all things clear: from end to end
 The divine cycle of the soul of man;
 How spirit, soul, mind, life, flesh, feeling, mix,
 And how withal they each reciprocate,
 As ocean, earth, air, fire, and wind; how flow
 The streams of feeling, and the cataracts
 Of passion; mine and mountain, this of pride,
 And that of covetousness. Man I know;
 The human universe, and the divine,
 And central fate; know all must be fulfilled
 Of nature that there is; of sin and strife,
 Peace, righteousness, change, self-delusion, self-
 Destruction, ere the earth can take new life,
 Or man become the minister of God.
 The world and man are just reciprocal,
 Yet contrary. Spirit invadeth sense
 And carrieth captive Nature. Be this true,
 All good is Heaven, and all ill is hell.
 All things are means for greater good. Thou, Sun,
 Art just a giant slave, a god in bonds.
 The summit-flower of all created life
 Is its union with Divinity.

In essence, yet existence separate.
High o'er my own existence, here then I
Look down upon the nature and the earth,
Yet mine, whose separate and combined ends
Have still to be evolved. How wide men miss,
While in the lower world of soul and sense,
In aiming even at life-ruling Truth—
Formless as air, simple and one as Death.
If Heaven and all its stars depend on earth,
Then may eternity on time ;—not else.
But since now earth is as a crumb of Heaven,
And time an atom of eternity,
Neither depends upon the other ; both
One essence being emanant from God,
Whose flowings forth are aye and infinite,
And radiant as the rivers of the skies.
One only truth hath consequence, God's truth
Inspired in man. Mere human truth,
Or falsehood matters not. The world may act,
Believe, or bless, or curse, as best it lists.
Yet men expend life, solemnizing points
Uncertain as the site of Paradise,
And area of Hades. Not the less,
There is no disappointment we endure
One half so great as that we are to ourselves.
We make our hearts the centres of all hopes,
All powers, all rewards, remembering not
That centres are imaginary points.
Imaginary circles only too
Are perfect ; therefore, draw life as we may,
Round as a world or as an atom round,
And pure as virgin visionary's dream,
Or perfect faith's regenerative wave—
It fails to match the true invisible
Whereof we labour. It is come to this.
One state of life with me hath passed away.
Aught henceforth that may matter be of doubt,
To me is matter of indifference. I
Love only that is certain. Me no more
The spirits of the bright invisible life
Shall throng round as the winds some mountain-top ;
Nor watery lightfulness of ghostly eyes,

Belonging heavenly forms informed with light,
Impose their spell of record under pain.
The inspiration quits me—it is gone—
Like a retreating army from the land
Which it hath wasted—the long gleaming mass
Snakelike, at last hath wound itself away,
And left me weak and wretched. None again
Of all the starry tribes of shining mien—
Swifter than undulations of the light,
A million in a moment, multiform
As atomies of air, shall visit me ;
Their word of leave is taken back—henceforth
Restricted to perfection, earth they quit.
True, albeit, I loved them more than life ;
I felt myself made sacred by their touch :—
But they are gone, and there is nought on earth
Left acceptable. Fiery shadows, hence !
I have outbraved ye once. It matters not.
I have left all for one ; Truth's countless rays
For Truth itself ; the mean for the supreme,
The dubitable for the thronéd power.
Yet thus I cannot rest. The mightiest sphere
Is not for man. The elements of mind
And matter are proportioned in all worlds ;
The father they and mother of all things :
And earth hath favour over crowds of stars.
I must reseek earth. Still what boots it now,
To plunge in pleasure or to passion bow
The very lion-honey of the heart
Which dwelleth in corruption ? Yet perchance,
'Twere wisdom to extract it while we may.
The oak, as lily, feels the lightest breeze.
The ineradicable seed is sown
Of love in life, and tide-like 'twill have way
O'er the impalaced prisoner of the breast.
The thirst for power and knowledge still exist,
And meet with dizzy mixture in the brain.
If suffering could but expiate offence,
They who have most enjoyed have most atoned,
It may be, humanly ;—but it cannot.
Earth-like, the heart must undergo all change
Ere the superior life be formed therein,

The chastity of heart which loves but God.
 Life's sensuous warmth, the spirit's holy chill,
 Time's week-day work, have yet to be gone through.
 The hortus siccus of a Paradise
 Is all earth now can boast. To God belongs
 The autumn of all nature. Men and angels
 Obey the order of existence. Fate !
 Who seeks thee everywhere will find thee there.

Lucifer. But I am one who waits not to be sought.
 It is from this mighty orb, Time's solar brood,
 How many or how far soe'er, are born ;
 And here, if chance or destiny hath bade
 Converge our courses, it were doubtless well.

Festus. Would I could well reply to word of thine.

Lucifer. All mysteries once I warned thee thou shouldst
 ken,

Nor mazéd stand at aught : that promise now
 I honour ; and will shew thee thou hast been
 Thyself the all thou seest. Ere every birth,
 The spirit, baptized into forgetfulness,
 Sloughs off the oppressive consciousness of years,
 Soul-saddening as with thunderstorms of thought,
 But leave is mine and power devolved of God
 With reminiscence of Time's foresped tides ;
 Thy memory to endow ; and from the passed
 Evoke eternal pictures ; for the world
 Itself is but an outline manifold
 And surface of true essence. Underneath
 That superficial veil is nought but God.

Festus. Draw it and die.

Lucifer. Not yet. It irks not me
 That thou wouldst aye, from this to that extreme,
 Hio with a footstep as of polar light,
 All sequence mocking ; urgent when the passed,
 Then calling on the future. But this sun,
 All life, hath its set service. Be it now
 Mine own to shew what hath been, and the soul,
 Here doting on the merest chance of death,
 Its prouder pre-existence, angel-mate
 Of immortality, all time foregone. .
 Souls are not new created, hour by hour,
 Like rain-drops ; but immortal in the Heavens

From form to form pass through eternity.
And now what seest thou ?

Festus. Surely, in yonder shape
I see approaching, purer, lovelier, her
Whose spirit enshrined in beauty's crescent star,
With bliss intense lit up my heart ; my soul
Steeped in the pearly radiance of her smile ;
But here of loftier and more grand aspect,
Nor now by inmost shadows saddened. Speak,
Transcendent spirit ; and whom thou seekest say ;
Or wherefore here.

Angela. The life of all that's good
Is one perpetual progress. Every thought
That strengthens, purifies, exalts a mind,
Betters the soul so blessing.

Festus. Spirit benign !
Such progress is perfection. It is the power
Of man's perfectibility gives earth
Capacity of Heaven. And thou hast left
Yon orb celestial, for this throne of light,
Throne than all empires wider ; but while thou
Art here of right and fitness, I of mere
Permission come, and momentary choice.

Angela. To will and to permit with one whose will,
Creative even of all obstructive force,
Is irresistible, were nought but one.

Festus. Thou, too, mine angel guardian !

Guardian Angel. Wheresoc'er
Thou art am I, or far or nigh, to ward
From woe, to watch 'gainst evil, or to warn.
But let the fates proceed. Here all is safe ;
Here, 'neath yon mighty ruler, like a god
Blessing his worshippers ; for he is found
Most blessing who most serves in godly love.

Lucifer. Yon servant-lord, chained doubtless to his
throne ;
Such empery be not mine !

Angela. Nay, see, he comes.

Guardian Angel. Lo ! Ouriel, regent spirit of the sun.

Ouriel. Were I sole servant of the universe,
As of one starry family, not then
Could I the pride admit thou feelest, fiend,

In ruling or in ruining one poor soul.
 The glory of kingship is humility.
 Hence knowing every star, for light is here
 No more obstructive to angelic eye,
 Than night to man's, I know all; and beside,
 Hear angel-whispers in remotest Heavens;
 O'er all, God's will, how strange soc'er, embrace;
 And blazon on my breast His holy law.
 Whatever its requirements, here obeyed.
 Do that ye came for hither. It is fate.
 Fate is God's spoken law, and age by age
 Concurrent with His written ripely fulfilled.

Guardian Angel. A life, a moment, all is doomed of
 God;

The aged growth of empire and the fall
 Ephemeral of a flower.

Angela. That all are here,
 Hosts of the blessed know; and for what end
 Thou, man! shalt learn; and with profound surpriso
 The volumed ages of the soul unseal,
 And reap at one glance Time's concentric growth.

Festus. Hold we, then, passed and future in ourselves?

Angela. Truly. Thy future lightly once I limned,
 Leave given, but just so far; and now thy passed,
 In shadowy visions, rimmed or cored with light,
 I call before thee as in painted clouds.

Festus. Spirit of power, thy wonders I await,
 And all the marvellous lore of Eld may teach.

Angela. Dost not remember, too, that once on earth,
 The fatal mystery thou besoughtest me,
 Unconscious what that mystery then comprised,
 To ope of thine own nature, while Death's seal,
 Inviolable upon our natal sphere,
 Yet iced my lips; and now wouldst know it still?

Festus. Spirit of beauty, who so late hast known
 Death, man's penultimate fate;—O humbled Death!
 Inevitable shadow, lackeying life;
 Archer, who sinnest never from thy mark!
 By God's grace conquered now, speak on, nor cease.

Angela. God, when he made the Heaven precede the
 earth,
 Made in them all celestial substances,

Angel and spirit and life-intelligence,
 And soul, if deathless, pre-existent ; all
 With power of gradual perfectness enriched ;
 That by successive sense of spherul life,
 Refined to common godhood, they might gain
 Original bliss. To mortals of thine orb,
 Ere now, though few and by full many an age
 Sundered, hath He the world-wide wave of light,
 From memory's fount revealed, that sage and seer,
 And now thyself mightst learn therefrom to live ;
 By teaching truth from good, and good from truth,
 The spiritual sunlife of the soul.

Festus. The air thy breath doth hallow feels to me
 Vital with light of truth.

Angela. Truth's holy beam
 Disperseth passion, as the moon full orb'd
 The clouds below her dissipates. Seek henceforth
 The soul to purify from mortal love
 By an immortal passion. Let no aim
 Less than celestial fix thine eye ; for soul,
 Though pre-essential in a bygone sphere,
 Or future form, shews still direct from God.

Guardian Angel. God's providential fates towards earth
 and man
 Have yet to be consummed ; and these comprise
 More than perchance thou knowest.

Ouriel. One element
 Subtracted from the universe, all is death.
 All forms material fade ; all signs, all modes,
 All shapes. The shews of mightiest things shall pass ;
 And nothing but essential Deity
 Be and remain.

Lucifer. The element I foresee
 To be withdrawn, seems strangely akin to life ;
 And this to me pertains. The end is nigh.
 God justifies my purpose, and permits
 Herein my action. Life or death, what now
 Matters, to me, or any ? All are doomed.

Guardian Angel. We, irrespective of each other's course,
 Work, and one only knoweth how all ends.

Angela. Here, 'mid this world-vast granary of light,
 Where the sun's fruitful rays are harvested,

Sit we, and thy passed being's shadowy scenes
See, silent; listening to the tongue of Time.

Festus. Silent? Then these be mysteries?

Guardian Angel.

Holy, grand!

Lucifer. They to their solar secrets; I to mine;
And mine intents; in number 'minishing,
In nature greatening. Ye will follow soon.

SCENE—*Garden and Bower by the Sea.*

ELISSA; afterwards LUCIFER and FESTUS.

Elissa. Come, Festus, let me think on thee, my love!
And fold the thought of thee unto my soul,
Until it fills it, and is one with it.
Ah! these poor arms are far from where they should be;
And this heart farther still. Mine only love!
Why art thou thus so long away from me?
I have whispered it unto the southern wind
And charged it with my love: why should it not
Carry that love to thee as air bears light?
And thou hast said I was all light to thee.
The stars grow bright together, and for aye,
Lover-like, watch each other; and though apart,
Like us, they fill each other's eyes with love
And beauty: and mine only fill with tears.
Oh! life is less than nothing without love!
And what is love without the embrace of love?
I would give worlds for one more, ere I die.

One taste of thy dewy lips, my love,
Would far more gladden me
Than a draught of the waters, in Heaven above,
Of immortality.

Then oh come hither to me, my love!
Back to this bosom, dear;
It is burning for thee, though thy love be dead,
Widow-like, on her lord's death-bier.

One touch of thy gentle hand, sweet feere!
One glance of thy glowing eye,
One pitying word, oh, one pardoning tear,
And I've nothing to do but to die;
But to die in the bliss of thy breast, my love,
Like a flower to the gods which is given;
That was happy in life, and is holy in death,
For it dies on an altar of Heaven.

Festus ! come to me. I do think I am dying.
 Let me bequeath my life to thee, that so.
 In doubling thine, I may live alway with thee.
 I know that I am dying. It is my heart
 Which makes me live that kills me. But I want
 To see him ere I do die. Oh ! he will come !
 He must know how I love him. It is long—
 Long since I saw him : I am ill with waiting.
 And I will fancy him coming to me now—
 Now he is thinking of me, loving me—
 He sees me—flies to me, half out of breath—
 His hand is on my arm—he looks on me—
 And puts my long locks backwards—God ! Thy ban
 Lies upon waking dreams. To weep and sleep—
 Dream—wake, and find one's only one hope false,—
 Is what we can bear, for we do endure it,
 And bear with Heaven still. Just one year ago,
 I watched that large bright star where it is now :
 Time hath not touched its everlasting lightning,
 Nor dimmed the glorious glances of its eye—
 Nor passion clouded it—nor any star
 Eclipsed—it is the leader still of Heaven.
 And I who loved it then can love it now ;
 But am not what I was, in one degree.
 Calm star ! who was it named thee Lucifer,
 From him who drew the third of Heaven down with him ?
 Oh ! it was but the tradition of thy beauty !
 For if the sun hath one part, and the moon one,
 Thou hast the third part of the host of Heaven—
 Which is its power—which power is its beauty !

Lucifer. It was no tradition, lady, but of truth !

Elissa. I thought we parted last to meet no more.

Lucifer. It was so, lady ; but it is not so.

Elissa. Am I to leave, or thou, then ?

Lucifer. Neither, yet.

I mean that thou shouldst fear me and obey.

Elissa. And who art thou that I should fear and serve ?

Lucifer. I am the morning and the evening star,
 The star thou lovest and thy lover too ;
 I am that star ! as once before I told thee,
 Though thou wouldst not believe me. But I am
 A spirit, and a star—a power—an ill

Which doth outbalance being. Look at me!
 Am I not more than mortal in my form?
 Millions of years have circled round my brow,
 Like worlds upon their centres;—still I live;
 And age but presses with a halo's weight.
 This single arm hath dashed the light of Heaven;
 This one hand dragged the angels from their thrones:—
 Am I not worthy to have loved thee, lady?
 Thou mortal model of all Heavenliness!
 And yet I have abandoned all these spoils,
 Cowered my powers, and becalmed my course,
 And stooped from the high destruction of the skies
 For thee, and for the youth who loveth thee—
 And is lost with thee: ye are both, both—lost!
 Thou hast but served the purpose of the Fiend.
 And thou art but the vessel of the sin
 Whose poison hath made drunk a soul to death;
 And he hath drunk; and thou art useless now.
 And it is for this I come; to bid thee die!

Elissa. I said that I was dying. God is good.
 The Heavens grow darker as they grow the purer;
 And both, as we do near them; so, near death,
 The soul grows darker and diviner, hourly.
 Could I love less I should be happier!
 But it is always to that mad extreme,
 That death alone appears the fitting finish
 To bliss like that my spirit presseth for.

Lucifer. Thy death shall be as gentle as thy life.
 I will not hurt thee, for I loved thee once.
 And thy sweet love, upon my burning breast,
 Fell like a snowflake on a fevered lip.
 Thy soul shall pass out of thee like a dream.
 One moment more, and thou shalt wake in Heaven!

Elissa. Thou sayest in one breath, lost, and saved in Heaven.

Lucifer. Whatever my words, God's are true. With Him
 Good Heavenly, Heavenly bliss eternal are,
 While all created things, if false, to these
 Perish; perdition even perisheth.
 Behold life's tyrant evil; peer of good;
 The great infortune of the universe.

Elissa. Thee one good deed I owe for.

Lucifer.

With thy life

I now repay myself.

Elissa.

But that still leaves

Me debtor.

Lucifer. No ; the deed was due to thee.

Time's orbit turns recurving to its source.

A consciousness of restorative power,

Ingrains and gladdens universal life.

Not aught is lost for aye. All Nature knows

Its end not less than origin divine.

And I by dim refraction of the truth,

What may be from what must be arguing,

Feel that by thee the hopeless —

Elissa.

Hast thou hope?

Lucifer. Like the first shower which cooled the burn-
ing plains,

Where Jove o'erthrew the giants, and on earth

Hailed rocks, thy words once wrought a blessing here ;

And caused the indelible germ of good, howe'er

Minute, which cored in all create abides,

Spring forth to lightwards. Fruited it not in time ?

Elissa. Truly. Yet 'tis forgiven ; as now to thee

I pardon grant for this ill boon of death ;

If inescapable ?

Lucifer.

Fate hath nought more sure.

Elissa. The world is heaving with the earthquake throes

Of some portentous birth, some form of power,

Whose orbéd head is to overtop all thrones.

Am I not bound to live till that I see

Which I have longed for, wrought for, prayed for ?

Lucifer.

No !

Bounden art thou to die. Some humbler soul

Shall see it, and therein glory for its hour ;

Enough for thee the triumph to foreview ;

I, too, see only darkness, at the best ;

As sacred night begins all things and ends.

But here, too clear thine end ; clear as the lines

Of fate, to palmist's eye, which cross the hand.

Elissa. I ever thought thee to be more than mortal.

And if thou art thus mighty, grant me this !—

Since now we love no more—as friend to friend—

Bring him I love, one moment, ere I die.

Lucifer. Thou judgest well ; I am all but almighty.
 And I have stretched my strength unto its limits
 To satisfy the heart of him who loves thee :
 In proof whereof, did I not give up thee,
 Because he loved thee ? I have given him all things
 Body or spirit could desire or have.
 And even at this moment, now he reigns
 King of the sun, and monarch of the seven
 Orbs that surround him—leaving earth alone—
 'The earth is in good keeping as it is.
 I know that he is hasting hither now ;
 But may not see thee living.

Elissa. It is not thou
 Who takest life : it is God, whose I shall be !—
 And his, with God, whom here my heart deifies.
 I glory in his power as in his love.
 But I will, will see him while I am alive.
 I hear him—he is come—it is he ! it is he !

Lucifer. Die ! thou shalt never look on him again.

Elissa. My love ! haste, Festus ! I am dying—

Lucifer. Dead !

As ocean racing fast and fierce to reach
 Some headland, ere the moon, with maddening ray,
 Forestal him, and rebellious tides excite
 To vain strife, heeds nought of the innocent skiff
 That thwarts his path, but with disdainful foam,
 Wrecks deathful ; I, made hasty by Time's end
 Impending, thus fill up Fate's tragic form !—Alas !
 A word could kill her. She hath gone to Heaven.

Festus. Fiend ! what is this ? *Elissa* !—she is not dead.

Lucifer. She is. I bade her die, as I had reason.

Festus. Now o'er the bosom of this death, I swear,
 God's will and mine one moment harmonized,
 I hate thee ; I abhor thee ; I abjure
 Thee, and thy works.

Lucifer. Who seeks the other first ?
 I am gone.

Festus. Away, Fiend ! Leave me. My *Elissa* !—

SCENE—*A Library and Balcony—A Summer Night.*

FESTUS, GUARDIAN ANGEL, and LUCIFER.

Festus. The last high upward slant of sun on the trees,
Like a dead soldier's sword upon his pall,
Seems to console earth for the glory gone.
Oh! I could weep to see the day die thus:
The death-bed of a day, how beautiful!
Linger, ye clouds, one moment longer there;
Fan it to slumber with your golden wings!
Like pious prayers ye seem to soothe its end.
It will wake no more till the all-revealing day;
When, like a drop of water, greatedened bright
Into a shadow, it shall shew itself
With all its little tyrannous things and deeds,
Unhomed and clear. The day hath gone to God,—
Straight, like an infant's spirit, or a mocked
And mourning messenger of grace to man.
Would it had taken me too on its wing!
My end is nigh. Would I might die outright!
And slip the coil without waiting it unwind.

Guardian Angel. Elect of saints, of sinners God forgiven,
Soul of my watching, not in all things thou
Hast pleased God, nor responded to my care;
But lone and comfortless nor I, nor Heaven
Would have thee.

Festus. Well I know I both have grieved.
But not thou knowest all things. 'Tween my soul
And God are secrets not consigned to thee.
Until I have assurance from His word,
Which may be I shall never have in life,
I dare not deem me safe, nor sealed in bliss.

Guardian Angel. More, then, than this beseems me not
to say.
One lives who loves thee still, by thee estranged.
Give pure fidelity due meed.

Festus. Her soul
Walks but with God.

Guardian Angel. Nay, she forgets not thee.

Festus. I know my destiny. I hope, not love.

Guardian Angel. But love's more mild reflection, such as that

Tempered with love divine was always hers ;
 She feels, thy saintly Clara, and with thee
 Fate sharing, such as life hath still to give,
 Might yet communicate. This is the love
 The Heavens approve ; this sole.

Festus. I doubt it not.

We may be reconciled ;—united, never.
 The end we aim at, her more sensitive soul,
 Filled with the love of lowliest loneliness,
 Will suit not, I foresee.

Guardian Angel. To her thou owest
 Essayed reunion ; and if there it end,
 Her pure thought will thine own refine ; perchance,
 May sanctify the sacrifice both make.

Festus. Thou sayest what ought to be. Be it mine to
 make
 Meet reparation.

Guardian Angel. Prosper.

Festus. Thanks !

Guardian Angel. Farewell.

Festus. All things I doubt ; myself most, and mine end.
 Who that hath lain lonely on a high hill,
 In the imperious silence of full noon,
 With nothing but the clear dark sky about him,
 Like God's hand laid upon the head of earth—
 But hath expected that some natural spirit
 Should start out of the universal air—
 And, gathering his cloudy robe around him,
 As one in act to teach mysterious things,
 Explain that he must die ?—that having got
 As high as earth can lift him up—as far
 Above that thing, the world, as flesh can mount—
 Over the tyrant wind, and the clouded lightning,
 And the round rainbow—and that having gained
 A loftier and a more mysterious beauty
 Of feeling—something like a starry darkness
 Seizing the soul—say he must die—and vanish ?
 Who hath not, at such moments, felt as now
 I feel, that to be happy we must die ?
 And here I rest—above the world and its ways ;

The wind, opinion—and the rainbow, beauty—
 And the thunder, superstition—I am free
 Of all;—save death, what want I to be happy?
 And shall I leave no trace, then, of my life?
 The soul begetteth shadows of itself
 Which do outlive their author: and are more
 Substantial than all nature, and the red
 Realities of flesh and blood, as echo
 Is longer, louder, further than the voice
 Of man can thunder, or his ear report.
 And oft the world hath Deified its echoes.
 A year!—and who shall find them? Can it be
 The mind's works have been deathless—not the mind?
 Or will the world's immortals die with me?—
 The sages, and the heroes, and the bards,—
 Whose verse set to the thunder of the seas,
 Seems as immortal as their ceaseless music;
 O God! I fain would dream Thou livest not:
 And that this world hath sprung up from chance seed,
 Unknown to Thee; and is not reckoned on.
 Hell solves all doubts.—Come to me, Lucifer!

Lucifer. Lo! I am here: and ever prompt when
 called for.

How speed thy general pleasures?

Festus. Bravely! Joys
 Are bubble-like—what makes them, bursts them, too.
 And like the milky way, there! dim with stars,
 The soul which numbers most will shine the less.

Lucifer. No matter—mind it not!

Festus. Yet, joys of earth!
 That she should ruin spirits is too hard.
 Who can avoid ye? who can say ye nay?
 Or take his eyes from off ye? who so chaste?

Lucifer. They have well-nigh unimmortalized myself.

Festus. Yet have they nought to sate the pining spirit
 Which doth enamour immortality.

No! they are all base, impure, ruinous—
 The harlots of the heart. Forgive me, God!
 I am getting too forlorn to live—too waste.
 Aught that I can do or love, shoots by me,
 Like a train upon an iron road. And yet
 I need not now reproach mine arm or aim;

For I have winged each pleasure as it flew,
How swift or high soever in its flight.
We cannot live alone. The heart must have
A prop without, or it will fall and break.
But nature's common joys are common cheats.
As he who sails southwards, beholds, each night,
New constellations rise, all clear, and fair ;
So, o'er the waters of the world, as we
Reach the mid zone of life, or go beyond,
Beauty and bounty still beset our course ;
New beauties wait upon us everywhere ;
New lights enlighten and new worlds attract.
But I have seen and I have done with all.
Friendship hath passed me like a ship at sea ;
And I have seen no more of it. I had
A friend with whom, in boyhood, I was wont
To learn, think, laugh, weep, strive, and love, together ;
For we were alway rivals in all things—
Together up high springy hills, to trace
A runnel to its birthplace—to pursue
A river—to search, haunt old ruined towers,
And muse in them—to scale the cloud-clad hills
While thunders murmured in our very ear ;
To leap the lair of the live cataract,
And pray its foaming pardon for the insult ;
To dare the broken tree-bridge across the stream ;
To crouch behind the broad white waterfall,
Tongue of the glen, like to a hidden thought—
Dazzled, and deafened, yet the more delighted ;
To reach the rock which makes the fall and pool ;
There to feel safe or not to care if not ;
To fling the free foot over my native hills,
Which seemed to breathe the bracing breeze we loved
The more it lifted up our loosened locks,
That nought might be between us and the skies ;
Or, hand in hand, leap, laughing, with closed eyes,
In Trent's death-loving deeps ; yet was she kind
Ever to us ; and bare us buoyant up,
And followed our young strokes, and cheered us on—
Even as an elder sister bending above
A child, to teach it how to order its feet—
As quick we dashed, in reckless rivalry,

To reach, perchance, some long green floating flag—
Just when the sun's hot lip first touched the stream,
Reddening to be so kissed ; and we rejoiced,
As breasting it on we went over depth and death,
Strong in the naked strife of elements,
Toying with danger in as little fear
As with a maiden's ringlets. And oft, at night,
Bewildered and bewitched by favourite stars,
We would breathe ourselves amid unfooted snows,
For there is poetry where aught is pure ;
Or over the still dark heath, leap along, like harts,
Through the broad moonlight ; for we felt where'er
We leapt the golden gorse, or lowly ling,
We could not be from home.—That friend is gone,
There's the whole universe before our souls.
Where shall we meet next ? Shall we meet again ?
Oh ! might it be in some far happy world,
That I may light upon his lonely soul,
Hard by some broad blue stream, where high the hills,
Wood-bearded, sweep to its brink—musing, as wont,
With love-like sadness, upon sacred things ;
For much in youth we loved and mused on them.
To say what ought to be to human wills,
And measure morals sternly ; to explore
The bearings of men's duties and desires ;
To note the nature and the laws of mind ;
To balance good with evil ; and compare
The nature and necessity of each ;
To long to see the ends and end of things ;
Or if no end there be, the endless, then,
As suns look into space ; these were our joys—
Our hopes—our meditations—our attempts.
And if I have enjoyed more love than others,
It is but superior suffering, and is more
Than balanced by the loss of one we love.
And love, itself, hath passed. One fond fair girl
Remains, who loves me still. But is it love
I feel ? or but pure kindness ? Let Fate prove :
How shall I find another like my last ?
Even as I had for her relinquished all,
Herself, that more than all, to me was lost ;
And Death cast down the tower of my intent.

Though thou and he o'erthrew, yet Heaven, I know,
 Received the soul, and the Eternal beauty
 Embayed within its arms the mortal fair.
 The golden and the gorgeous loveliness—
 A sunset beauty! Ah! I saw it set.
 My heart, alas! set with it. I have drained
 Life of all love, as doth an iron rod
 The Heavens of lightning; I have done with it;
 And all its waking woes, and dreamed of joys.
 No more shall beauty star the air I live in;
 And no more will I wake at dead of night,
 And hearken to the roaring of the wind,
 As though it came to carry one away—
 Claiming for sin. Ah! I am lost for ever.
 To earn the world's delights by equal sins,
 Seems the great aim of life—the aim succeeds.
 Here it is madness, and perdition there.
 And, but for thee, I had renounced these joys—
 These curséd joys my soul now writhes among,
 Like to a half-crushed reptile on a rose:—
 Ay, but for thee I might have now been happy!

Lucifer. Why charge, why wrong me thus? When
 first I knew thee,

I deemed it thine ambition to be damned.
 Thine every thought, almost, had gone from good,
 As far as finite is from infinite;
 And then thou wast as near to me as now.
 Thou hadst declined in worship, and in wish
 To please thy God; nor wouldst thou e'er repent.
 What more need I to justify attempt?
 Have I shrunk back from granting ought I promised?
 Thy love of knowledge—is that satisfied?

Festus. It is. Yet knowledge is a doubtful boon—
 Root of all good and fruit of all that's bad.
 I have caused face to face with elements,
 Yea, learned the luminous language of the skies,
 And the angelic kindred of high Heaven;
 The bright articulations of all spheres,—
 Impetuous-hearted orbs, and mountain-maned,
 Aye circling onwards breathless through the air—
 And wisest stars which speak themselves in signs
 Too sacred to be explicable here;

And now what better am I?—nearer God?
When the void finds a voice mine answer know.

Lucifer. What better or what worse thou canst not tell.
For, good and evil! Wherein differ they?
Do they not both accrue from the same cause,—
As ripeness and decay? Light, light alone
Of hues, how contrary soever, is
The common cause.

Festus. Distracter of God's truth!
Shall not His word suffice the living world?

Lucifer. Thou canst not have lacked joys?

Festus. We seek them oft
Among our own delusions, pains and follies.

Lucifer. Hath not care perished from thy heart, as did
The viper flung from the apostle's hand?

Festus. Ay; and, like that, all care will cease in fire.
Dark wretched thoughts, like ice-isles in a stream,
Choke up my mind and clash;—and to no end.

In spite of all we suffer and enjoy,
There comes this question, over and over again,
Driven into the brain as a pile is driven—
What shall become of us hereafter? what
Is it we shall do? how feel, how be?
And there are times when burning memory flows
In on the mind, that saving it would slay,
As did the lava-floods which choked of yore
The Cyclopean cities—brimming up
Brasslike their mighty moulds. And shall the passed
Thus ruinously perfect aye remain:

Or present, passed, and coming all be one,
In natural mystery? Like snow which lies
Down-wreathéd round the lips of some black pit,
Thoughts which obscure the truth accumulate;
And those which solve it in it lose themselves;
And there is no true knowledge till descent,
Nor then till after. What shall make the truth
Visible? Through the smoky glass of sense
The all-blessing sun would never know himself.
All truth is one. All error is alike.

The shadow of a mountain hath no more
Substance than hath a dead and moss-mailed pine's;
But only more gigantic impotence.

Were act mind's mate, man had a firm hold now
 On the immortal future ; but we turn
 From either skiey end, star garlanded,
 Teeming with light, and from the spirit truths
 Which crown all worlds, to gauds and lures of life
 All-formed, and beauty's eyes inspired with tears,
 Or fired with mirth conclusive ; and so lose
 Count of those heavenly spheres we meant, at first,
 To reckon to the last atomic light.
 But how shall these, the joys and cares of earth,
 And life's vain schemes appear to the great soul,
 Which hath no friend, no equal save the world,
 When all these constellated systems known
 To the keen ken of science, space's depths,
 And the whole mighty Heavens that bind us in,
 Hang like a pale speck, doubtful to the eye,
 In unimagined distance ? Is it thus
 Ordered of God lest man's weak powers should fail,
 And the round wall of madness pound us in ?
 Yea, then the cares, toils, duties, needs of life
 Are blessings in the highest to the world.
 Eternity ! thou holdest in thy hand
 The casket of all secrets ; death the key.
 And now what seem I even to myself ?
 The impulse of life ceaseth and we live
 On the rebound of being ; less and less
 Till the minute momentum wholly ends.
 As some vain wind which having wasted life
 In rounding mountains, and their shadowy woods
 Made lyre-like vocal, dies at last at sea,
 The sun sole witness, where deep brooding spreads
 The uttermost circumference of a calm :
 So the soul struggling through life's death-clouds, ends
 In the serene Eternal. May it be !
Lucifer. No life is waste in the great worker's hand.
 The gem too poor to polish in itself
 Is ground to brighten others. Courage, friend !
 Hast thou not had thine every quest ?

Festus. Save one.

Lucifer. I proffer now the power which thou dost long
for.

Festus. I have beheld my name writ in the book

Of life eterne. Wherefore then temptst thou me ?
 What were a seat among the sons of kings
 To him whose seat is with the sons of God ?

Lucifer. Fate's scheme must be fulfilled. Salvation
 though

Promised is not achieved ; and if achieved
 Is still not life accomplished. Never known
 Unto created being may the laws
 Of Fate and Destiny's divine decree,
 Until the day dawn of fulfilment, be.

Festus. When God once speaks, His word for ever
 stands.

Lucifer. Say but the word, and thou shalt press a
 throne,

But less than mine,—the scarcely less than God's ;—
 A throne, at which earth's puny potentates
 May sue for slavedoms—and be satisfied.

Festus. The paltry pittance of a world like this
 Were not a bribe for me, nor all its crowns
 Crushed into one tiara, but that thus
 By supersession of all earthly sway
 Autocrasie divine were mine ; and man,
 Knowing the power of truth and faith, might see
 Fate, highest of all laws, and recognize
 In mine direct complicity with Heaven :
 My will, my fate, God's fate..

Lucifer. So let it be.

Festus. I have had enough of the infinities :
 I am moderate now. I will have the throne of earth.

Lucifer. Thou shalt. Yet mind!—with that the world
 must end.

Festus. I can survive.

Lucifer. Nay, die with it must thou.

Festus. Why should I die ? I am egg-full of life :
 The world is in its first young quarter yet ;
 I dare not, cannot credit it shall die.
 I will not have it, then.

Lucifer. It matters not ;
 I know thou never wilt have ease at heart
 Until thou hast thy soul's whole, full desire ;
 Whenever that may happen, all is done.
 Once again therefore search the scroll of life ;

Mark what is done, what undone. Lo! in love,
 Already twice hath judgment passed upon thee.
 Say hath not evil wrought its own revenge,
 And death the only guerdon thou hast gained?
 Let then mere self-life cease. The heart's career
 Is ended. With the world thy part is now.
 The depths of feeling, passion, pleasure, woe,
 The mysteries and dread delights of spirit,
 All thou hast sounded. Now behoves to live
 The worldlife of the future—last the same
 One instant or for ever. Bury love.
 The steedlike world stands ready. Mount for life.

Festus. Well, then—be it now! I live but for myself—
 The whole world but for me. Friends, loves, and all
 I sought, abandon me. It is time to die.
 I am yet young; yet have I been deserted,
 And wronged, by those whom most I have loved and
 served.

Sun, moon, and stars! may they all fall on me
 When next I trust another—man or woman.
 Earth rivals hell too often, at the best.
 All hearts are stronger for the being hollow.
 And that was why mine was no match for theirs.
 The pith is out of it now.—Lord of the World—
 It will not directly perish?

Lucifer. Not perhaps.
 Thou wilt have all fame, while thou livest, now.

Festus. I care not; fame is folly: for it is, sure,
 Far more to be well known of God than man.
 With all my sins I feel that I am God's.

Lucifer. Farewell, then, for a time.

Festus. I am alone.
 Alone? He clings around me like the clouds
 Upon a hill. When will the clouds roll off?
 When will sun visit me? O Thou great God!
 In whose right hand the elements are atoms;
 In whose eye, light and darkness but a wink;
 Who, in Thine anger, like a blast of cold,
 Dost make the mountains shake like chattering teeth;
 Have mercy! pity me! For it is Thou
 Who hast fixed me to this test. Wilt Thou not save?
 Forgive me, Father! but I long to die.

I long to live to Thee, a pure, free mind.
Take again, God! and thou, fair Earth, the form
And spirit which, at first, ye lent to me.
Such as they were, I have used them. Let them part.
I weary of this world; and like the dove,
Urged o'er life's barren flood, sweep, tired, back
To Thee who sent'st me forth. Bear with me, God!
I am not worthy of Thy wrath, nor love!—
Oh! that the things which have been were not now
In memory's resurrection! But the past
Bears in her arms the present and the future:
And what can perish while perdition is?
From the hot, angry, crowding courts of doubt
Within the breast, it is sweet to escape, and soothe
The soul in looking upon natural beauty.
Oh! earth, like man her son, is half divine.
There is not a leaf within this quiet spot,
But which I seem to know; should miss, if gone.
I could run over its features, hour by hour,
The quaintly figured beds—the various flowers—
The mazy paths all cunningly converged—
The black yew hedge, like a beleaguering host,
Round some fair garden province—here and there,
The cloud-like laurel clumps sleep, soft and fast,
Pillowed by their own shadows—and beyond,
The ripe and ruddy fruitage—the sharp fir's
Fringe, like an eyelash, on the faint blue west—
The white owl, wheeling from the grey old church,
Its age-peeled pinnacles, and tufted top—
The oaks, which spread their broad arms in the blast,
And bid storms come, and welcome; there they stand,
To whom a summer passes like a smile:
And the proud peacock towers himself there, and screams,
Ruffling the imperial purples of his neck.
O'er all, the giant poplars, which maintain
Equality with clouds half way up Heaven;
Which whisper with the winds none else can see,
And bow to angels as they wing by them;
The lonely, bowery, woodland view before—
And, making all more beautiful, thou, sweet moon,
Leading slow pomp, as triumphing o'er Heaven!
High riding in thy loveless, deathless brightness,

And in thy cold, unconquerable beauty,
As though there were nothing worthy in the world
Even to lie below thee, face to God.
And Night, in her own name, and God's again,
Hath dipped the earth in dew;—and there she lies,
Even like a heart all trembling with delight,
Till passion murder power to speak—so mute.
Young maiden moon! just looming into light—
I would that aspect never might be changed;
Nor that fine form, so spirit-like, be spoiled
With fuller light. Oh! keep that brilliant shape;
Keep the delicious honour of thy youth,
Sweet sister of the sun, more beauteous thou
Than he sublime. Shine on, nor dread decay.
It may take meaner things: but thy bright look,
Smiling away an immortality,
Assures it us—nay, it seems, half, to give.
Earth may debase. God will not part with thee,
Fair ark of light, and every blessedness!
Yes, earth, this earth, may foul the face of life,
Like some swart mole on beauty's breast—or dead
Stiff, mangled reptile some clear well—while thou,
Like to a diamond on a dead man's hand,
Shalt shine, aye brilliant, on creation's corse;
Whence God shall pluck thee to His breast, or bid
Beam mid His lightning locks. What are earth's joys
To watching thee, tending thy bright flock over
The fields of Heaven? Thy light misleadeth not,
Though eyes which image Heaven oft lure to hell:
Thy smile betrayeth not—though sweet as that
Which wins and damns. Mother, and maid of light!
That, like a God, redeems the world to Heaven—
Making us one with thee, and with the sun,
And with the stars in glory—lovely moon!
I am immortal as thyself; and we
Shall look upon each other yet, in Heaven
Often—but never, never more on earth.
Am I to die so soon? This death!—the thought
Comes on my heart as through a burning glass.
I cannot bend mine eyes to earth, but thence
It riseth, spectre-like, to mock—nor towards
The west, where sunset is, whose long bright pomp

Makes men in love with change—but there it lowers
Eve's last still lingering, darkening, cloud ; and on
The escutcheon of the morn, it is there—it is there!
But fears will come upon the bravest mind,
Like the white moon upon the crimson west.
I have attractions for all miseries :
And every course of thought, within my heart
Leaves a new layer of woe. But it must end.
It will all be one, hereafter. Let it be ;
My bosom, like the grave, holds all quenched passions.
It is not that I have not found what I sought—
But, that the world—tush ! I shall see it die.
I hate, and shall outlive the hypocrite.
Stealthily, slowly, like the polar sun,
Who peeps by fits above the air-walled world—
The heavenly fief he knows and feels his own,
My heart o'erlooks the Paradise of life
Which it hath lost, in cold, reluctant joy.
I live and see all beauteous things about me,
But feel no nature prompting from within
To meet and profit by them. I am like
That fabled forest of the Alp Pennine,
Which leafless lives ; whereto the spring's bright showers,
Summer's heat breathless, autumn's fruitful juice,
Nothing avail ;—nor winter's killing cold.
Yet have I done, said, thought, in time now passed,
What, rather than remember, I would die,
Or do again. It is the thinking on't,
And the repentance, maddens. I have thought
Upon such things so long and grievously,
My lips have grown like to a cliff-chafed sea,
Pale with a tidal passion : and my soul,
Once high and bright and self-sustained as Heaven,
Unsettled now for life or death, feels like
The gray gull balanced on her bow-like wings,
Between two black waves seeking where to dive.
Long we live thinking nothing of our fate ;
For in the morn of life we mark it not—
It falls behind : but as our day goes down
We catch it lengthening with a giant's stride,
And ushering us unto the feet of night.
Dark thoughts, like spots upon the sun, revolve

In troops for days together round my soul,
 Disfiguring and dimming. Death ! O death !
 The past, the present, and the future, like
 The dog three-headed, by the gates of woe
 Sitting, seem ready to devour me each.
 I dare not look on them. I dare not think.
 The very best deeds I have ever done
 Seem worthy reprobation, have to be
 Repented of. But have I done aught good ?
 Oh that my soul were calmer ! Grant me, God !
 Thy peace ; that added, I can smile and die.
 Thy Spirit only is reality :
 All things beside are folly, falsehood, shame.

SCENE—*Colonnade and Lawn.*

FESTUS and CLARA.

Festus. Henceforth this spot be sacred ; here, where first
 I shrined thee, flower of beauty, in my heart.
 None holier to the tribes of earth ; not thou,
 Divine Elborz, now cold and crowned with snow
 Since rested on thy brow the ark ; but once
 Peak Paradisal whereupon God's sons
 Of saintliest lineage helped the harps of Heaven,
 And joined the angelic hymn each eve, ere rest :—
 Earth's first communion with the blessed of Heaven.
 Not holier thou, though meanest mound on earth,
 Nigh Moslem city of the moon, where, first,
 After long severance for their death-fraught sin,
 And world-wide wanderings lonely, from afar,
 Our great original mother him espied,
 Tall as the crownéd palm, though bowed with woe,
 Whom her soul clave to ; one whole age had passed ;
 Nought more divine than demons had she seen,
 More human than the ape ; when her hot tears,
 And his repentant groans drew down from Heaven
 Permission for their dear reunion there ;
 The mount of recognition ; hallowed, thence,
 To after ages, by that blessed embrace,
 Obliterative of woe. Come ! come, oh come !

Sweet solace of my soul, I long to make
 To thee atonement. Reconciled to thee,
 All parenthetic passions sacrificed,
 The world shall slip off easy from our hands,
 And we not miss her. Long! how long I wait!

I wait for thee, even as the weary west
 Waits for the evening star,
 With whom the eternal promises of rest
 And glory are.

I wait, as waits a storm-cloud in the sky,
 The bow divine of peace,
 Which bids the thunders and the lightnings lie
 Down, and fear cease.

I long to meet thee, as earth longs to view
 Icebound, spring's golden flowers;
 Thy beauty soothes my spirit, as the dew
 Day's burning hours.

As Heaven's own light upon some sainted shrine
 Where mouldering relics be,
 Thou shinest in upon this heart of mine,
 Sacred to thee.

And as a line erased some trace still bears
 Of words therein first writ,
 Which neither pen can hide, nor penitent tears
 As 'twas refit;

It matters not what other powers around
 Here graved their conquering name;
 Below all depth thy love will still be found,
 Truth's secret fame.

Known to ourselves, we only share with Heaven
 The secret yet by me ineffable.

Lo! now I see thee coming, come, at last.

Clara. At thy desire I come, though hard to me.
 We have lived separate lives, unlike, unsought
 Each by the other. Wherefore meet we now?

Festus. Thee seeking in thy sacred solitude,
 I told thee I had somewhat to impart,
 Somewhat to ask; if asking were not vain,
 Which springs despondingly from dubious heart.

Clara. Time was it was not thus. But others came
 Whose tyrant beauty and more soaring souls
 Thee dazzled, me eclipsed. Already years

Have passed since first we were, what now we are,
Strangers.

Festus. Nay, by the sun! I swear it—never so;
However distant. Oftentimes it is
The irresistible weakness of ourselves
Which overcometh more than other's strength.
Oft hath this heart allured by glittering rites
And sacred titles, and celestial names,
Offered at other's altars, and decreed
Wildly, profanely, negligence of thine.
True I have worshipped idols and forsworn
The loving faith I owed to thee alone;
Canst thou forgive? reconsecrate the heart,
Rededicate the temple? Do not all
Beliefs how far soever from God's truth,
Circle around the same in mode prescribed,
As round Heaven's secret and all-central sun
The constellated skies? And shall then love
Lack like justification, or in vain
Plead the necessity of liberty?—
For truly I was destined for this end,
And in myself believed the most at first.
Faith first and last, immortal love and hope,
Which in the breast dies of reality,
Be each the gracious tenant of this heart.
The love which with the spiritual starts
Weakening and darkening, strained through gloom and
gleam,
Sets off enough in sense, but ever ends
In its original heavenly purity.
And mortal knowledge, which is error, dies,
And spiritual truth alone outlasts
All nature; love insensibly with Heaven
Here blending, thither wending, thence derived.
Clara. Wert thou as I such need had never been;
But we had lived serene and sinless here,
Aimless, save loving God and bettering man.
Nay, let it be so still, with thee, I pray.
As in a round wide view from some tall hill,
Central and isolate, it happeneth oft,
The furthest things on all sides eyeable
Are village temples tapering to the skies,

Be such, too, the horizon of the soul ;
And every ultimate object, unto Heaven
Calmly aspiring, indicate its end,
And sanctify the limits of our life.
For as in gentlest exhalations earth
Breathes forth the glistening steams which, high in air,
Glow, sunlipped, into clouds of rosy gold,
Or seek again her breast in fruitful dew ;
So of our aspirations and desires,
Might we endow the skiey calm of life
With retributive blessings, and a clime
Of love create about us bright and boon ;
An everlasting spring of holy good,
And venerable beauty. But, alas !
Men breathe forth passions which fall back in blights,
And stormy desolations, that defile
The sky-born streams, and flood life's fields with woe.

Festus. The evil in our nature we can act
Always and utter ; but the inner good
Hath inexpressive boundlessness. Earthlike,
Each carries with him his own atmosphere,
Or pure or foul, where'er we orbitate.
Who knows himself in spirit, all things knows,
Above, beneath, around, within himself ;
The orb of life owned space, from pole to pole,
The horizon of existence. Yea, so far
As nature means, the atom and the all
Commune and know each other ; as the slant
Invisible axis of the earth too fine
For fairy to find footing tiptoe, bears
All superincumbent continents and seas,
Mountains and air realms. Knowing thus, that once,
My own heart like a wizard's magic book,
Studded with spells despotic to call up
Sprite, spectre, and familiar fiend, must needs
Assoilzied be from every fiery sign
And fateful cipher, ere made safe for aye ;
I seek thee as a priestess pure of old,
That thou mightst hold to me the holy branch,
Dipped in soul-cleansing wave, the branch of peace :
That peace thou lovest so well and both desire ;
And from thee ask absolvment of passed sin.

For as when the sun's light in some high fane
On golden altar gleaming, finds itself
In face of something holier, more divine ;
So on thy sacred soul the truths of Heaven
Beam in subservient blessings.

Clara. If thou meanest
That thou dost hope forgiveness, it is given ;
Thine hath it been ere asked for ; always thine.

Festus. Bright soul be blessed. Take again thy name
Unto thee ; sign of reunited love.

Clara. Name which because it hath lingered on thy lips,
In love's pure tones full oft, always to me
Is sacred. None shall name me so but thou,
Thou only. When thou changest, that shall change.

Festus. Breathe not to me of change ; albeit I lived
On earth, till like some desert builded fane,
Though based on astral laws, she ceased from sight,
Wasted by winds, worn down by elements,
Smoothed level under Time's insatiate sands ;
Oh, I should change no more. Henceforth to me
Be thou, thou art, the type of holiest things ;
The symbol and fulfilment of all good ;
Truth's promises and prophecies inspired,
Bound in one saintly volume love-illumed ;
A book of benedictions sealed to me ;
A second covenant ; oh, a spirit-bride,
A new alliance, sanctified of Heaven.

Clara. 'Twas not for pleasure, power, or knowledge, I
First loved thee ; no ! but for thyself, thy soul ;
And now I seek not these, I dare not have.
As some great glacier from its icy breast,
Expelling aught of baser nature, seeks,
By this mysterious means, to purify
Its visible essence ; so the saintly soul,
Out of its high and bright vitality,
Rejects, in silent scorn, those worldly taints
And aims extraneous, which itself debar
From inmost commune, and most high with Heaven ;
Why, then, thy spirit degrade with greed of power,
Thankless, unblest, as I have heard ? To me
This were forbiddance. Aught that clogs the soul,
Or clouds its aspirations, I abhor.

Be it not therefore that though one in heart,
We are in spirit twain.

Festus. Nay, speak not thus.
All things are full of presage ; winds and streams
And cloud-shapes, which in Heaven's inverted bowl
Forecast our future. The presage of some vast
And world-whole revolution, nigh at hand,
In a sonorous whisper broods o'er earth.

Clara. True, I have heard it. Would it were untrue.
Hearts may be sad at parting, but at meeting
They should spring light as birds upon the spray.

Festus. Thy thoughts light up my mind as stars the sea.
I am the son of Heaven, and am made free
From all low laws and lesser fealties.
This is the age that men are destined evil ;
But say not Fate doth not fulfil itself.
What if my cause before men seem askant,
Yet is it straight as light in the eye of Heaven
To God I am no mystery. Well he knows.
All motives ; and my objects I avow
Each night to Him, who each morn sanctions them.
It is not the world which makes me great. It is I
Greaten the nations.

Clara. I foresee the end,
In utter and unutterable woe.

Festus. True to my purpose, what if I be false
To others, and their objects, it is nothing ;
Mine good, I'll hold it great and holy still.
Have I not seen this among coming things
For what seems ages ? Knew I not the fate
Out of all others ? That star-studded crown,
Which hangs as though a hand out of the Heavens
Held it before mine eyes, where'er I wend ?
Rather let earth and truth and all things fail,
Than I fulfilling fate. Let these bring forth,
Whose unbethought of duty it is to serve,
Not reign, crown, robe and sceptre, the bright signs
And constellations of dominion. World !
Go, toss thy head and shake thy shoulders, like
A horse unharnessed. Wars cease. Never more
Shalt thou, blood-blotted brand, allure men on

To practice of thy fascinating sin ;
 Nor crimson cloud-bath of the evening sun
 The dreams of sleeping city or hamlet, dye
 With visionary death. Remains for thee
 Nothing, O earth ! but penitence and peace ;
 All strife composed. Wilt share with me this throne ?

Clara. The only throne I hope for is a throne
 Which neither policy can found, nor power ;
 Which never war can overthrow, nor blood
 Befoul, nor treachery undermine, nor kin
 Succeed to or thrust off ; a throne upon
 The right hand of the Humblest. Praise Him, earth.

Festus. I am at peace with all men save myself.
 My rule is safe ; nay, warranted of fate.

Clara. Thousands of enemies must be thine even
 now.

No mortal man is safe ; and least of all,
 A mortal foe. The terror of a tyrant
 Knows no distinction. If he does not fear,
 He hates ; and if he does not hate, he scorns ;
 And scorn and hate and fear are all with him,
 And alike deadly ; he, therefore, insecure ;
 For man by man, each slays him in his mind.
 But this is not the future I, in heart,
 Have dared so long to dream of. Even though
 Thy will should vaunt immortal dominance,
 To me it brings scant pleasure. I had hoped
 New love to welcome like the morning air,
 Which wakes the buds in roseland ; and that still,
 If like twin hands around the face of life,
 Thou hadst a wider scope and bolder course,
 Our end and object were yet one and same,
 To note the hours, and years fulfil of love.
 But now, since I this mighty rumour heard,
 My thoughts, though many, are all sad, and cast
 In one mould, tearlike. I behold them come,
 The long, long train of states depute and powers,
 Leading earth's empire after them. And now
 Thy glory my soul's lord is like the sky ;
 Nothing is to be seen beyond it. Minds
 Of lesser space may sparkle in it starlike.
 But thine embraceth and outstretcheth all.

Nothing can wrong nor ruffle it, nor endanger
More than a wild bird's wandering wing, the air.

Festus. Faithful and dreadful like a lioness,
There spake the bride of empire.

Clara. Nay, I see
Thy triumph, and abjure it. Would I might
For thee disclaim it, even as for myself.
It is meat forbidden unto my fasting soul,
Unclean, accurséd. Thou canst not enjoy
World-service and Heaven's favour.

Festus. Both be mine.

Clara. Choose thou between thy destiny and me.
How great soe'er things being or done of man,
To be, to do, is less than to believe :
For to believe God is to know Him love.
As on some hill at day dawn we see born
Of early light the Sun, head of all worlds,
Who hour by hour exalts his own place ; Truth
Instructing us the while it is earth beneath
Which rolls away ; he, lord of time, in his
Eternal zenith throned, climbs not nor stoops ;
So they, in spirit knowledge wisest, know,
As more and more the soul is purified,
It is their own fleshly ignorance from them rolled,
Which opens them to Heaven, and to God's light,
Unvarying and supreme, due ingress gives.
It is we who change towards Him, not He towards us ;
As therefore to the Sun, nor east nor west,
Nor day nor night is, but one timeless noon ;
So from the Lord of life unbounded beams
One everlasting effluence, which is love.
To gain this ; to prepare for this, is all.

Festus. Sweetest and dearest, kindest, best of beings !
Truth I have both to realize and impart,
And would, while yet time serves, thy spirit enrich ;
But though foredoomed to lose thy late-gained love,
Fate I must follow. Said I not my soul
Had taken up its freedom, and assumed
The birthright of creation ?

Clara. Truly so.

Festus. And holding in itself the omnitude
Of Being, God endowed, it doth become
World representative ?

Clara. Well, be it thus.

Festus. Thus versant with an absolute life the spirit
Makes towards its end and great reward, in peace,
O'erpassing all earth's lesser joys.

Clara. Say on!

I would not have thy soul abase itself
By one thought about me.

Festus. Nay, speak not so.

But love's career is over in my heart.
A vaster sphere expands before me. Power
And knowledge I can give thee for thy love,
But scarce repay in kind.

Clara. I hear thy words.

The fragrance of the flower of life is fled;—
Still let it linger where thou laidst it, here!

Festus. It is I who suffer. Suffer therefore me,
While I am with thee. The sole love I feel
That might have, that hath, blessed me—but what eye
Can see the circuit of an orb at once?
The orb of life, alas! is on the wane.
And much must yet be said, much yet be done.
All things have premonition of their end;
And mighty states exhausted of old faith,
Have sought extremest unction of the new,
Which can alone regenerate. Nations now
Stand sponsors for the right divine of man,
To every blessing earth can give, or Heaven.
The earth-flower closeth, even now its leaves.
Death's dews are falling. We are verging nigh
On sundown of Time's universal day;
And these be life's last vespers. It remains,
As promised by the all-granting power, to change
The essential for the real, and to translate
The virtual into practice. All that truth,
Mining her way through policy profound,
Secretes from masses skillless to commute
Force into power; all that the holy bond
Of man's most high fraternity secures,
Is mine, unthought of by the obsequious world,
Unfeared, unprized. One right exists, one sole,
Whereto man's regal race, all times conceived,
Yields sacred loyalty, the right of doom
Divine, the destiny imposed of God.

God now elects a nation, now a man,
A child, maybe, a dagger, or a dream,
To work His will, and sanctifies His means.
That mean, that man am I : the seal of time,
And closure of the canon of all kings.
It is the imperial soul alone can make
The sacrifice supreme ; I claim it mine.

Clara. I wonder ; yet my soul its balance keeps ;
Not prizing, not approving all I hear ;
More marvelling how thou knowest of these truths ;
And how the end of all things blends with thine.

Festus. God's thoughts are as a firmament of stars,
Fixed suns ; the heavenly truths which he inspires,
Or we by nature know of Him, the all-
Revealed, all-hidden, eternal shew to us,
Innumerable, vast. Man's loftiest thoughts,
Even on his own destinies, as one soul,
Or volumned into nations, or as all,
These momentary meteors of the mind,
Which, flashing through, illumine life's hemisphere,
Whose counterpart is death, or Heaven—or what?—
With but decadent light. Yet all is true ;
And both are real, both perfect, both of power ;
Eternal those, these temporal, not the less
Whose union constitutes the universe.
As when some mighty Mage, intent to know
Life's coming secrets, 'gainst the reticent skies
Wagers his skill, and notes how from the breast
Of tempting virgin by her side who holds
The golden cluster ; or his marital hand
Who heads the mourning triad, leap they forth,
The instantaneous starlets ; or, from his blade
Galactic, trenchant, waved to save from death
His fair beloved, whence full many an orb,
In meteoric nights autumnal, fills
In falling half the firmament with light ;
And thus from fixed and falling spheres combined,
Draws astral fate inevitable, of war,
Of love, deliverance, death, or what he would ;
So I, although in humblest wise, forebent
To know, from God's fixed truths, and natural thoughts,
Which, like Heaven's evanescent spherelets, light

Together, man's high brain, my destined end
 Deduce, and future of the universe.
 And weighing all these things, the sum I find
 As fortunate; for at man's, the native's birth,
 The star of love, peace, power benefic ruled.
 In mid-life all the houses of the heavens,
 Law, science, power, faith, health, wealth, dearth, death,
 He suffered, well or ill; and when at last
 Dying betwixt the trembling lights of time,
 Ere yet his eyes lost sight, he hailed the dawn
 Eternal, and beheld the ascendant sun,
 High-priest of nature, in whose law of love
 The faithful votary fain had walked, approach.
 His head to shrive him, and his soul release,
 Mid blessings unconditioned, unconceived.
 So the same star which led him into life,
 His spirit restores all kindly to the Heavens;
 And earth's vast horoscope is verified.
 Wherefore let us rejoice together; each
 Congratulating on destiny divine
 The other; and the world.

Clara. How sayest thou, then,
 Destroyed? Mysterious judgment, as when God,
 With ruinous fire from Heaven, hurls down the fane
 Wherein His faithful worship; or salutes
 With death this holier temple of the soul,
 Sudden and swift,—no time for penitence,
 Nor prayer.

Festus. Arraign not I, God's deep decrees.
 I cannot tell thee all I know nor dare;
 For wisdom seals the lips which wonder opes.
 The dread initiation into light
 Saddens the soul it hallows and expands.
 But thou because thou knowest much of truth—

Clara. What is it thou wilt tell me?

Festus. I have seen
 What ne'er again may be, nor e'er till now hath been.

Clara. Where didst thou see—and what?

Festus. In space. He took me there,
 Of whom I oft have told thee. Midst in air
 Was God. I'll tell thee that He told the spheres;
 For the great family of the universe

Round Him were gathered as a fire : but we
 Held back ; and saving God, none did us see ;
 Though round His throne in sunny halo rolls
 A ceaseless, countless throng of sainted souls.

Clara. Say on, love ! Let me hear.

Festus.

A sound, then,

first

I heard as of a pent-up flood just burst :
 It was the rush of God's world-winnowing wing ;
 Which bowed the orbs as flowers are bowed by breath of
 spring.

And then a voice I heard, a voice sublime—
 To which the hoarded thunders of all time
 Pealing earth's death-knell shall a whisper be—
 Saying these words—Where will ye worship me ?
 Ay, where shall be your Maker's holy place ?
 The Heaven of Heavens is poor before His face.
 How shall ye mete my temple, ye who die ?
 Look ! can ye span your God's infinity ?
 Hear, mighty universe, thy Maker's voice !
 Let all thy myriad, myriad worlds rejoice !
 Lo ! I, your Maker, do amid ye come,
 To choose my worship and to name my home.
 This heard each sphere ; and all throughout the sky
 Came crowding round. Our earth was rolling by,
 When God said to it—Rest ! And fast it stood.
 With voice like winds through some wide olden wood,
 Thus spake the One again : Behold, O Earth !
 Thy parent, God ! it is I who gave thee birth.
 With all my love I did thee once endow ;
 With all my mercy—and thou hast them now.
 But hear my words ! thou never lovedst me well,
 Nor fearedst my wrath : dreadst thou no longer hell ?
 Dream'st thou that guilt shall alway mock those fires ?
 That deathless death which Hell for aye expires ?
 Should all creation its rebellion raise,
 I speak, and this broad universe doth blaze—
 Pass like a dew-drop 'neath mine angry rays—
 Blaze like the fat in sacrificial flame :
 And that burned offering, when I come to claim,
 Its scorching, quenchless mass, all I will pour
 Upon thy naked soul :—canst thou endure ?

He spake ; and, as the fear-fraught words flew past,
Earth fluttered like a dead leaf in their blast.
Am not I God ? Answer me ! Hope not thou,
Impenitent, to ward my righteous blow.
Yet, come again ! my proffered mercy hear !
Rejoice and sing ! sweet music in thine ear,
And peace I speak : seek but to be forgiven :
Repent ! and thou shalt meet thy God in Heaven.
Go ! cleanse thy brow from blood, thy heart from crime,
And on thy Saviour call while yet is time !
Now to this universe of pride and sin
I speak, ere yet I call mine angels in.
Draw nigh, ye worlds !—and, lo ! their light did seem
Before His eye paled to a pearl's dull beam.
Attend ! said God—o'er all He lifts His hand ;
Where will ye set my tent ? where shall my temple stand ?
And all were dumb. Distracting silence spread
Throughout that host as each were stricken dead.
I made ye. I endowed ye. Ye are mine.
Then trembled out each orb : Thine, God ! for ever Thine !
All that ye have, within myself have I ;
God, am complete ; full inexhaustibly.
I dwell within myself, and ye in me,
Not in yourselves ; I have infinity.
The everything in all things is my throne ;
Your might is my might, and your wealth mine own :
'Tis by my power and sufferance that ye shine :
I live in light, and all your light is mine.
Be dark ! said God. Night was. Each glowing sphere
Dulled. Night seemed everything and everywhere ;
Save that in utter space a feeble flare
Told that the pits of hell were sunken there.
Shuddered in fear the universe the while,
Till God again embraced it with a smile.
Divine delight responsive spread through space ;
Till like a serious smile, whose gradual grace
Expands its soul-born sunshine o'er the face,
Lo, all things made were glad. Come now and hear,
Ye worlds ! said God, the truth I thus make clear :
My words are mercy, wherefore should ye fear ?
And straight, obedient to his sacred will,
One great concentrate globe they crowd to fill ;

Systems and suns pour forth their glowing urns.
Full in the face of God the glory burns.
Hearken, thou host! thy trembling hope to raise,
I to all Being thus make plain my ways:
God, the creator, bade creation rise,
And matter came in void like clouds in skies;
Lifeless and cold it spread throughout all space,
And darkness dwelled and frowned upon its face:
Chaos I bade depart this work of mine,
And straight the mighty elements disjoin.
Then light I lit; then order I ordained,
And put the dance of atoms to an end.
Matter I brake, and scattered into globes,
And clad ye each in green and growing robes:
Your sizes, places, forms, I fixed with laws,
And wrought the link between effect and cause.
Your spheres I framed; your stations, motions, planned;
These compass fingers all your orbits spanned.
Then formed I lives for each, which might inherit
Will, reason, form, and power—not deathless spirit.
Then I made spirits, things of Heavenly worth,
Deathless, divine. Round these from every earth,
I gathered forms and features fit for love,
Trust, pleasure, power, and all I could approve.
One universal nature spread through space
Free, faulty, human, born for better place.
To every spirit I disclosed my name,
My love, my might, and whence all Being came:
To deathless souls I righteously decreed
Accountability for thought, word, deed.
Then every orb complete, along the sky,
In glory, beauty, order, harmony,
I launched. Souls, worlds did every thing possess
Which could a mortal and immortal bless.
To all the hope of happier state was given—
For all I keep one common boundless Heaven.
Ye all have freedom, and ye all do sin,
For ye are creatures: but ye all may win
Life everlasting—everlasting joy,
If ye do but the love of sin destroy:
This only is offence; for sin ye must
Not by my will; but weakness dwells with dust.
Unless ye have sinned ye cannot enter Heaven.

How shall a sinless creature be forgiven ?
And by forgiveness only can ye claim
Hope in my mercy, trust upon my name.
I know that ye would all to sin be given ;
But I, even God, have paid your price to Heaven :
And if ye will not journey on that way—
The truth—the life—what do ye merit ? say !
Death is the gate of life, and sin, of bliss :
Mark the dread truth ! but mourn your deeds amiss.
Cast off your guilt ! abandon folly's path !
Turn to the Lord your God ere hell His wrath !
Turn from your madness, wicked ones, and live !
Take, take the bliss which God alone can give.
God, the Creator, me all beings own—
God, the Redcemer, I will still be known—
God, too, the Judge—the each—the three—the one.
Again the Everlasting cried—Repent !
To bless or curse I am omnipotent.
And what art thou created Being ? Round
That world of worlds His arm the Almighty wound ;
The bright immensity He raised, and pressed,
All trembling like a babe, unto His breast.
There, in the Father's bosom rose again,
Of filial love, the universal strain ;
Strong and exultant—blissful, pure, sublime,
It rolled, and thrilled, and swelled, in notes unknown to
time.
Think ye that I, who thus do ye maintain ;
Thus alway cherish ye, or all were vain—
Ye all would drop into your native void,
If by my hand ye were not held and buoyed :
Think ye that I cannot uphold in Heaven,
In righteous state, the souls I have forgiven ?
Be this a weightier task ? with God, 'tis one
To guide a sunbeam or create a sun—
To rule ten thousand thousand worlds or none.
Art thou not with Thy Lord, O host of Heaven ?
Answered all spirits, Yea,—then first forgiven ;
The primal covenant, Lord ! Thou mad'st with us
Is sealed and sanctified and fulfilled thus.
Go, worlds ! said God, but learn, ere ye depart,
My favoured temple is an humble heart ;
Therein to dwell I leave my loftiest skies—

There shall my holy of all holies rise !
 He spake ; and swiftly reverent to His will,
 Sprang each bright orb on high its sphere to fill.
 Glory to God ! they chanted as they soared—
 Father Almighty ! be Thou all-adored.
 Thou art the glory—we, Thine universe,
 Serve but abroad Thy lustre to disperse.
 Unsearchable, and yet to all made known !
 The world at once Thy kingdom and Thy throne—
 Pity us, God ! nor chase us quite away
 Before Thy wrath, as night before the day.
 In Thee, our God, we live ; from Thee we came—
 The feeble sparks of Thine eternal flame.
 Thy breath from nothing filled us all at first,
 And could again as soon the bubble burst.
 In Thee, like motes in the sunbeam, we move ;
 Glow in Thy light, and gladden in Thy love.
 Earth only, like a spot upon the sun,
 Sullen remained in that grand union
 Of joy, praise, harmony. Word spake she none.

Clara. Earth only had been chidden.

Festus.

Not alone.

High o'er all height, God gat upon His throne.
 Downwards He bent : and, as a grain of sand,
 He lifted up our globe. Then from His hand,
 As 'twere in pity, bowled the ingrate sphere,
 Which rushed like ruin down its dark career.
 And high the air's blue billows rolled and swelled
 On many an island world mine eye beheld.

Clara. And where and what is he, this mighty friend,
 Who to thee, human, thus his might doth lend ?
 Who bore thee harmless, as thou sayest, through space,
 And brought thee front before thy Maker's face ?

Festus. I know not where he is. It is but at times
 That he is with me ; but he aye sublimed
 His visits thus, by lending me his might
 O'er things more bright than day, more deep than night.
 And he obeys me—whether good or ill
 His or my object, he obeys me still.

Clara. O Festus ! I conjure thee to beware
 Lest thus the Evil one thy soul ensnare.

Festus. What ! may not a free spirit have preferred

A mortal to his heart—as thou thy bird
 Lovest, because it singeth of the sky,
 Although it is as far below thy soul
 As I 'neath an archangel's majesty?
 God will protect the atom as the whole.

Clara. Him, then, I pray: the spirit full must share
 The truths it feels with God Himself in prayer.
 So guide us, God! in all our works and ways,
 That heart may feel, hand act, mouth shew Thy praise;
 That when they meet, who love, and when they part,
 Each may be high in hope, and pure in heart:
 That they who have seen, and they who have but heard
 Of Thy great deeds, may both obey Thy word!

Festus. Unto the wise belongs the sphere of light,
 And to the spirit world-compelling might.
 Yon sun, now setting in the golden main,
 Shall count me his ere next he rise again.
 One farewell round I long to make above,
 As now with thee this leavetaking of love;
 Once more to circle round the central skies,
 And sound the silent infinite, where rise
 Creation's outflows, and the new-born light
 Smiles babe-like on the lap of ancient nursing night.
 Would that the earth had nothing fair to lure,
 Nor being more to answer or endure!
 But I foresee, foresuffer. Bound to earth,
 Wrecked in the deeps of Heaven, in Death's expiring birth!

Clara. Is all then over? I ask not what hath come
 Of those who once were thine, but fear nor speak.
 Fate brooks not to be questioned in the light.
 But shall we part? Is this ordained or not!
 Or is the earth-star struggling still with death?

Festus. Being of beauty, whose yet unfilled arms
 Form an incarnate Eden, and whose eyes
 The angel watchers o'er it—mine exiled
 And gazing on thee gainless—smile no more.
 For if life's feelings flow not now as erst,
 It is not that they are vanished like a stream
 Sun dwindled or earth drained, but that their face
 Is frozen 'neath the world's wide winter. No!
 The liquid lightning of thine eye no more,
 Nor flowery light which blooms upon thy cheek,

Nor delicate perfection of pure form,
A breathing revelation incarnate—
Illumes for me the dusk of life. Night reigns.
My heart's poles now are fixed like earth's in Heaven,
Shining in solid silence to the moon,
Starry and icy silence; and all ceased
Their torrid oscillances. Once it rolled
In tropic splendour. Now experience treads
Deep in the snow of blossoms. Maid of love!
Were thy heart now free as a zoneless nymph,
And on life's race of rapture mad to start,
Like her of old, ere dropped the golden pome,
'Twere vain to me; immoveable is mine;
Still as a statue studying stony tome.
Unite we may not. In this fatal life
There is no real union. All things here
Seem of monadic nature; and with God,
All oneness and sole allness lives alone.
Still even in this—Time's age penultimate—
And in my heart's exhausted mine, I feel—
But I for ever have forsworn it—both
The magic' might of beauty and the fierce
Deliciousness of love. Yes! I must be
Alone in sacrifice, alone in soul.
Thoughts which were once my masters, now I hold
In retributive bondage, Titanlike,
Round my soul's unseen centre. Yea, I feel
Like to a liberated god of old,
Who eyes at length the unbounded calm of Heaven,
Rejoicing the Eternals to rejoin.
I hold life's feast, death's fast indifferent.
There is divorce between my heart and me;
And I have neither bride nor brethren—I;
But I achieve my end—the end of all.
From this is no appeal to death nor fate,
Nor the just Gods; herein are all at one.
Love me not therefore now; but when with me
The great cessation happens; when the poles
Are icing, and this tyrant of life's realm
Totters to execution, and well-earned
Ruin—attend me; whether in the flesh
Or in the spirit be with me; and, mark;

One birdlike thought through death's white void shall fly
 Right to thy bosom home, the thought of thee.
 Cherish it there as mine, and royally
 In its snow palace. It will bear the gaze
 Of all the star souls and the spirit stars
 Which will the living land of light indwell.
 I feel earth slacken in rotation: Time
 Lays down his weary length as though the work
 Wherefore he had his hire were finished. Go!
 Now there is nothing left for us on earth
 Save separation.

Clara. Still I love thee, still.

Hast thou no further word?

Festus. No, death alone

Is that I live for, ever in mine eye;
 Death, white-robed doorkeeper of Heaven, whose sword
 Soul from the spirit severeth. For one,
 In wisdom reinstated, and brought back
 Into the sovereign presence, the golden soul
 Which sees things as they are, and not alone
 E'en as they are, but as they shall be known
 Through wide Eternity, is thenceforth still;
 As he who in the mystic caldron bathed
 Immortal grew, but dumb. Henceforth am I
 Death-mute; for all things else with me consent.

Clara. But this is not the end.

Festus. Go! I have said it.

I am henceforth alone. My thought of thee
 Above all passionate fire-peaks, and above
 The sacred snowline of my heart where soul
 And spirit in extatic stillness join,
 Bides in perpetual purity. Farewell.

SCENE—*Elsewhere.*

FESTUS; GUARDIAN ANGEL.

Festus (alone). I feel as if I could devour the days
 Till the time came when I shall gain mine end;
 God shall have made me ruler, and all worlds
 Signed the sublime recognizance. Till then,
 Even as a boat lies rocking on the beach,
 Waiting the one white wave to float it free,

Wait I the great event ;—too great it seems.
Yet, Lord ! Thou knowest that the power I seek
Is but for others' good and Thine own glory ;
And the desire for it inspired by Thee.
So use me as I use it. Thou hast passed
Thy word that such I shall enjoy, and then
My mission is accomplished in this world.
I go unto another, where all souls
Begin again, or take up life from where
Death broke it at. I cannot think there will be
Like disproportion there between our powers
And will, as here ; if not, I shall be happy.
I feel no bounds. I cannot think but thought
On thought springs up, illimitably, round,
As a great forest sows itself ; but here
There is nor ground nor light enough to live.
Could I, I would be every where at once,
Like the sea, for I feel as if I could
Spread out my spirit o'er the endless world,
And act at all points : I am bound to one.
I must be here and there and everywhere,
Or I am nowhere. Sense, flesh, feeling, fail
Before the feet of the imperious mind,
To which they are but as the dust she treads,—
Windlike treads o'er, uplifts and leaves behind.
How mind will act with body glorified
And spiritualized, and senses fined,
And pointed brilliantwise, we know not. Here,
Even, it may be wrong in us to deem
The senses degradations, otherwise
Than as fine steps, whereby the Queenly soul
Comes down from her bright throne to view the mass
She hath dominion over, and the things
Of her inheritance ; and reascends,
With an indignant fiery purity,
Not to be touched, her seat. The visible world,
Whereby God maketh Nature known to us,
Is not derogatory to Himself
As the pure Spirit Infinite. A world
Is but, perhaps, a sense of God's by which
He may explain His nature, and receive
Fit pleasure. But the hour is hard at hand.

When Time's gray wing shall winnow all away,
 The atoms of the earth, the stars of Heaven ;
 When the created and Creator mind
 Shall know each other, worlds and bodies both
 Put off for aye ; man and his Maker meet
 Where all, who through the universe do well,
 Embrace their hearts' desire ; what things they will
 And whom remember ; live, too, where they list ;
 And with the beings they love best, and God,
 Inherit and inhabit boundless bliss.
 Hear me, all-favouring God ! my latest prayer ;
 Thou unto whom all nations of the world
 Lift up their hearts, like grass-blades to the sun ;
 Thou who hast all things and hast need of nought ;
 Thou who hast given me earth and all it holds,
 Give me, from out Thy garner stored with good,
 Some sign, Lord ! while I live in proof to earth
 My prayers are with Thee ; that they rend the clouds,
 And, rising through the sightless dark of space,
 Reach to Thy central throne. Oh ! let me feel,
 What was my constant dream in my young years,
 And is in all my better moments now,—
 My hope, my faith, my nature's sum and end,
 Oneness with Thee and Heaven. Lord ! make me sure
 My soul already is in unison
 With the triumphant. Ah ! I surely hear
 The voices of the spirits of the saints,
 And witnesses to the Redeeming Truth ;
 Not, as of old, in scanty scattered strains,
 Breathed from the caves of earth and cells of cities,—
 Nor as the voice of martyr choked with fire—
 But in one solemn Heaven-pervading hymn
 Of happiness impregnable, as when
 From the bright walls of the Son's city they
 Looked on the war of hell, host upon host,
 Foiled by God's single sword before their gates
 Of perfect pearl ;—nearer and nearer now !
 This is the sign, O God ! which Thou hast given,
 And I will praise Thee through eternity.

Saints from Heaven. Call all who love Thee, Lord ! to Thee.
 Thou knowest how they long
 To leave these broken lays, and aid
 In Heaven's unceasing song ;

How they long, Lord ! to go to Thee,
 And hail Thee with their eyes,—
 Thee in Thy blessedness, and all
 The nations of the skies ;

All who have loved Thee and done well,
 Of every age, creed, clime ;
 The host of saved ones from the ends
 And all the worlds of time :
 The wise in matter and in mind,
 The soldier, sage, and priest,
 King, prophet, hero, saint, and bard,
 The greatest soul and least ;

The old and young and very babe,
 The maiden and the youth,
 All re-born angels of one age—
 The age of Heaven and truth ;
 The rich, the poor, the good, the bad,
 Redeemed alike from sin ;
 Lord ! close the book of time, and let
 Eternity begin.

Festus. Will ye away, ye blessed ones ? To God
 I then commend ye, and my soul with yours.
 And midst the light in which ye live, oh ! mind
 Of all the sunless days and starless nights
 Which myriads pass on earth, and pray for them !
 Oh ! pray for those who in the world's dark womb
 Are bound, who know not yet their Father, God !—
 Lord of all earth, all worlds, all Heaven ! lift up
 My spirit to Thy glory ! Let me share
 The comfort of Thy love, and while ordained
 To the great task I have to go through, let
 No more misgivings, fears, nor mortal doubts,
 With the cold dew of darkness chill the soul
 Which Thou hast hallowed with Thy love, and which,
 Like molten gold within its mould, hath made
 The thing that holds it precious :—or if, Lord !
 For Thine own purpose Thou wilt suffer such,
 May they pass quick and perish tracelessly ;
 So, too, all thoughts of earth and pangs of death
 May I o'ercome at last ; and with Thy chosen,
 Seraphs and saints, and all-possessing souls,
 Which minister unto the universe,
 Enthroned in spirit and intensest bliss,
 Succeed to Heaven for ever.

Guardian Angel.

Mortal, hear !

The soul once saved shall never cease from bliss,
Nor God lose that He buyeth with His blood.
She doth not sin. The deeds which look like sin,
The flesh and the false world, are all to her
Hallowed and glorified. The world is changed.
She hath a resurrection unto God,
While in the flesh, before the final one,
And is with God. Her state shall never fail.
Even the molten granite which hath split
Mountains, and lieth now like curdled blood
In marble veins, shall flow again when comes
The heat which is to end all ; when the air
Is as a ravening fire, and what at first
Produced, at last consumeth ; but the soul
Redeemed is dear to God as His own throne,
And shall no sooner perish. Harken, man !
Wilt thou distrust God ? Doubt on doubt no more.
Prepare thee for the power and lot sublime
Whereto the Lord hath called thee. He hath heard
The prayers with which thou hast entreated Him,
And bids me tell thee, shrink not, doubt not. He
Will comfort and uphold thee at the end ;
For after God the Chooser, God the slain,
Cometh the God of Comfort to the heart,
Whose action and effect is ministrant
For ever after—consummating all.

Festus. Thou art mine Angel guard ! I recognize,
In every holy feature of thy face,
The instigated thoughts of Heaven which oft
In my world wanderings blessed me ; in thy touch
The virtuous resolution ; in thy voice
The warning and foreknowledge unexplained,
Not unesteemed, prompting to do or shun ;
And in thy smile joy total and supreme.

Angel. But death's eternal secret all must hear.

Festus. I fear, I fear this miracle of Death
Is something terrible.

Guardian Angel. Where faith were not
In God's all-moulding hand, such fear were well.
As when aërial voyager—in car
Strung pensile 'neath some huge and gaseous globe,

That but by loftier levity attains
Life's limit, upwards eyes the Infinite,
Formless and vast as Deity ; then, while through
His mind, himself a wind-steered atom—pass
Inexplicable thoughts and doubts sublime,
And troublous forecast of his travel's end,
Pores, wistful, downwards on the sea of clouds,
Peaked far below his feet in billowy hills,
Sea over sea, whose vaporous baptism he
Must plunge through, ere he sets where fortune lists,
Or tyrant gusts decree ; so 'twixt all truth
And death, the uncertain soul, sustained alone
By its own insubstantive powers, less free
Than mutable, sees no safety in its course,
Or fixed goal afar. But, soul-assured,
Rests on the rock-foundations of God's word ;
Nor brooks the awful liberty to doubt.

Festus. My soul feels firmer ; fitter for the end,
Too soon, come when it will. But while life lasts
This holy mystery of incertitude,
Lawed of God, doubtless, to some good, rules all.
As when from some broad bluff where rival winds,
Hold haughty revelry, by night we see
The lurid lights of a huge city lie
Below, like an abyss of fallen stars,
Marked dully from those heavenly ones, and feel
The storm and stress of transit, though subdued,
And as with deadened thunder, still the ear
More than day's roar and the tempestuous tides
Of social strife ; so, calling back our years,
We note where youth's bright aspirations soar
O'er life's dim actions ; how, too, as we age,
Life's recollections more than present deeds
Or hopes, mind's courts judicial crowd ; while there,
Still, by her balancee, sits everlasting doubt
Poising and pondering all things. But to God,
Go angel, and declare that I repent
Of all misdeeds ; that but for His own grace
I should repent of my whole life ; that on
That grace, which now hath sanctified the whole,
I trust for all the rest of it, and then
For ever ; that I am prepared to act

And suffer as He bids, and in all things
To do His will rejoicing.

Angel. It is done.

Festus. Oh ! I repent me of a thousand sins,
In number as the breaths which I have breathed.
Am I forgiven ?

Angel. Child of God, thou art.
It is God prompts, inspires, and answers prayer ;
Not sin, nor yet repentance, which avails :
And none can truly worship but who have
The earnest of their glory from on high—
God's nature in them. The world cannot worship.
And whether the lip speak, or in inspired
Silence, we clasp our hearts as a shut book
Of song unsung, the silence and the speech
Is each His ; and as coming from and going
To Him, is worthy of Him and His love.
Prayer is the spirit speaking truth to Truth ;
The expiration of the thing inspired.
Above the battling rock storm of this world
Lies Heaven's great calm, through which as through a bell
Tolleth the tongue of God eternally
Calling to worship. Whoso hears that tongue
Worships. The Spirit enters with the sound,
Preaching the one and universal word,
The God-word, which is spirit, life, and light ;
The written word to one race, the unwrit
Revelment to the thousand peopled world.
The ear which hears is preattuned in Heaven,
The eye which sees prevision hath ere birth.
But the just future shall to many give,
Gifts which the partial present doles to few ;
To all the glory of obeying God.

Festus. The knowledge of God is the wisdom of man—
This is the end of being, wisdom ; this
Of wisdom, action ; and of action, rest ;
And of rest, bliss ; that by experience sage
Of good and ill, the diametric powers
Which thwart the world, the thrice-born might discern
That death divine alone can perfect both,
The mediate and initiate ; that between
The Deity and nothing, nothing is.

The Atlantean axis of the world
And all the undescribed circumference,
Where earth's thick breath thins off to blankest space,
Uniting with inanity, this truth
Confess, the sun-sire and the death-world too,
And undeflected spirit pure from Heaven,
That He who makes, destroying, saves the whole.
The Former and Re-Former of the world
In Wisdom's holy spirit all renew.
To know this, is to read the runes of old,
Wrought in the time outlasting rock ; to see
Unblinded in the heart of light ; to feel
Keen through the soul, the same essential strain,
Which vivifies the clear and fire-eyed stars,
Still harping their serene and silvery spell
In the perpetual presence of the skies,
And of the world-cored calm, where silence sits
In secret light all hidden ; this to know—
Brings down the fiery unction from on high,
The spiritual chrism of the sun,
Which hallows and ordains the regnant soul ;
Transmutes the splendid fluid of the frame
Into a fountain of divine delight,
And renovative nature ;—shows us earth,
One with the great galactic line of life
Which parts the hemispherical palm of Heaven ;
This with all spheres of Being makes concord
As at the first creation, in that peace,
Promotional, præelemental, prime,
Which is the hope of earth, the joy of Heaven,
The choice of the elect, the grace of life,
The blessing and the glory of our God.
And—as the vesper hymn of time precedes
The starry matins of Eternity,
And daybreak of existence in the Heavens,—
To know this, is to know we shall depart
Into the storm-surrounding calm on high,
The sacred cirque, the all-central infinite,
Of that self-blessedness wherein abides
Our God, all kind, all loving, all beloved ;—
To feel life one great ritual, and its laws.
Writ in the vital rubric of the blood,

Flow in obedience and flow out command,
 In sealike circulation; and be here
 Accepted as a gift by Him who gives
 An empire as an alms, nor counts it aught,
 So long as all his creatures joy in Him,
 The great Rejoicer of the Universe,
 Whom all the boundless spheres of Being bless.

Angel. I go. Thy God is with thee. We shall meet
 Again in Heaven no more to part.

Festus.

Thou art gone!

It is sweet to feel we are encircled here
 By breath of angels as the stars by Heaven;
 And the soul's own relations, all divine,
 As kind as even those of blood;—and thus
 While friends and kin, like Saturn's double rings,
 Cheer us along our orbit, we may feel
 We are not lone in life, but that earth's part
 Of Heaven and all things. Praise we, therefore, God!
 O all ye angels, pray and praise with us!

SCENE—*A Gathering of Kings and Peoples.*

FESTUS throned, LUCIFER, and CLARA.

Festus. Princes and Peoples! Powers once of earth!
 It suits not that I point to ye the path
 By which I reached this soul supreme domain—
 This mountain of all mortal might. Enough,
 That I am monarch of the world—the world.
 Let all acknowledge loyally my laws,
 And love me as I them love. It will be best.
 No rise against me can stand. I rule of God:
 And am God's sceptre here. Think not the world
 Is greater than my might—less than my love—
 Or that it stretcheth further than mine arm.
 Kings! ye are kings no longer. Cast your crowns
 Here—for my footstool. Every power is mine.
 Nobles! be first in honour. Ye, too, lose
 Your place, in place: retrieve yourselves in good.
 Peoples! be mighty in obedience.
 Let each one labour for the common weal.

Be every man a people in his mind.
 Kings—nobles—nations ! love me and obey.
 I need no aid—no arms. Burn books—break swords !
 The world shall rest, and moss itself with peace.

Kings. Tyrant, we love thee not ; and we as one
 Man will resist thee.

Festus. Well I know it. Mark !
 Ye are all nations, I a single soul.
 Yet shall this new world order outlast all.
 Behold in me the doomsman of your race.
 Will, reason, passions, all shall serve and aid,
 Yea your most secret qualities and powers.

Nobles. Reason rebels against thee, and condemns
 Tyrant and slave alike ; exalting this,
 Deposing that, adjusting all ; as yet
 Hope we and mean to do with thee and these.

Festus. And seek ye to gainstand the faith in God ?
 O blindest rulers ! will ye never learn
 Your proper region and due dominance ?
 Whatever ye rule I rule over you.
 All unobstructed power is sanctified.
 Divine rule is a tyranny of good.
 Mine shall be like it. Tyrant ! Well ; I am.
 I glory in the title ; reverence
 Myself, for that it is accorded me.
 What is above this soul of mine but Heaven ?

Peoples. The opposite of rule divine is best
 For man. Power gives temptation, which in turn
 Sets aside honour, social duty, law,
 And right ; creates abuse, and abuse strife,
 Confusion, retribution, bloodshed, sin.
 Though for a season cloud and meteor
 Usurp the heights of air, yet soon the stars
 Their peaceful reign resume ; and now at last,
 Since earth hath wiser waxed, the people theirs.
 Therefore descend thou and make room for us ;
 Or else thy powers submit to perfect proof,
 And our approval, ratified by all.

Festus. Man's conscience is an angel or a fiend,
 According to his deeds. What have I done ?
 I was the youngest born of Destiny,
 The favourite of Fate, and Fortune's heir ;

My word for once was law and prophesy.
 Speak, spirit! have I forfeited my star?

Lucifer. Storms give to dust a privilege to rise
 And fly in all men's faces—even kings'!

Festus. What if a million molehills were to league
 Their meannesses together, with due pomp,
 And to some mountain say,—In the name of God!
 Whither dost thou aspire? Does any deem
 That great imperial creature would descend
 From those sublimest solitudes of Heaven,
 Where it had dwelt in snowy sanctity,
 For ages, ere the mud-made world below
 Was more than half conceived, to parley there
 At its own footstool, and lay down its crown,
 And elemental commune with the skies,
 Because its height was so intolerable,
 And its supremacy termed tyranny?
 Why look ye all amot? Is doomsday come?
 Stand forth, and speak, sole servant of my throne!
 If aught thou hast to settle and explain—
 Or straightway send these nations to their homes.

Lucifer. Ye mighty once—ye many weak, give
 ear!

I and my god—for god he sure must be,
 In human form, who sitteth there enthroned—
 For readier rule, and for the good of all,
 Have cast again the dynasties of earth
 According to the courses of the air:—
 Therefore, from east, and west, and north, and south,
 Four element-like ministers shall bend
 Before his feet. Harken, thou unkinged crowd!
 Ye have not sought the good of those ye governed.
 The people only for the people care.
 Ye seem to have thought earth but a ball for kings
 To play with: rolling the royal bauble, empire,
 Now east—now west. Your hour and power is past.
 Ye are the very vainest of mankind,
 As loftiest things weigh lightest. Ye are gone!
 Nations, away with them! Nor do ye boast!
 Ye find that power means not good, not bliss.
 But ye would wed delusion:—now, ye know her.
 And she is yours for life—and death—and judgment.

There is no power, nor majesty, save his :
 His is the kingdom of the world and glory.
 His throne is founded centre-deep by Heaven ;
 And the whole earth doth bless him. Unto all
 He hath laid out one perfect level law—
 His will. For as the people cannot rule
 Themselves, so neither may a crowd of kings :
 And hence hath been the evil of the earth—
 Now ceased for ever. War will be no more.
 His is the sway of social sovereign peace :
 His tyranny is love and good to all :—
 His is the vice-royed, vouchesafed, sway of God :
 And he will turn the world, at will ; as light
 Turneth the world round. Greet your Lord, and go !—
 Depart, ye nations !—

Festus. Hark ! thou fiend ! dost hear ?

Lucifer. Ay ! it is the death groan of the sons of men—
 Thy subjects—King !

Festus. Why hadst thou this so soon ?

Lucifer. It is God who brings it all about—not I.

Festus. I am not ready—and—it shall not be !

Lucifer. I cannot help it, monarch ! and—it is !
 Hast not had time for good ?

Festus. One day—perchance.

Lucifer. Then hold that day as an eternity.

Festus. All around me die. The earth is one great
 death-bed.

Lucifer. Time's tide is nearly out, and sick folk die.

Clara. Oh ! save me, Festus ! I have fled to thee,
 Through all the countless nations of yon dead—
 For well I knew it was thou who satest there,
 To die with thee, if that thou art not death :
 And if thou wert, I would not shrink from thee.
 I am thine own, own Clara !

Festus. Thou art safe !
 Here in the holy chancel of my heart—
 The Heavenly end of this our fleshly fane,
 I hold thee to communion. Rest thee safe.

Clara. Men thought I was an angel, as I passed ;
 And caught up at my feet—but I 'scaped all.
 I knew—I was sure, that I should die by thee.
 The heart is a true oracle—I knew it !

Festus. Then there is faith among these mortals yet.
Thy beauty cometh first, and goeth last—
Willow-like. Welcome!

Clara. Oh! I am so happy!

Festus. I speak of thee as of the dead;—the dead
Are alway faithful.

Clara. I will stay with thee—
Though angels beckon—may I? Let me, love!
I dare not—cannot, take mine eyes from thee,
For fear of looking on the dead. Dear Festus!

Festus. Thou art the only one hast answered me,
Love to love—life to life.

Clara. Oh! I am dying!
The Heavens are pressing down upon me. God
My Father seeks the spirit of His child.

Festus. Go, golden lily, bloom thou on the breast
Of everlasting sanctity.

Clara. Farewell!
Give me one kiss—the kiss of life and death—
The only taste of earth I will take to Heaven.
Here! let me die, die in it!

Festus. Last and best!
Now am I one again. Oh! memory runs
To madness, like a river to the sea.
These long illustrious tresses, gold of gold,
Yea, very gold of very gold, which here
Insult all thought of limit; to my touch
Dearer than were the sceptre of the sun,
Wave me no more bright welcome; and these lips,
Whose animated silence sweetlier told
Than talk of other angel, move no more
In silence or in sound; these bright brown eyes,
Still as extinguished stars, no more reflect
The virtues of the Heavens. Man's world of old,
Began with woman, mother of all life;
And, after countless ages, now, with thee,
Bride of my soul, Death's youngest daughter, ends.
Our union is, and hath been, but in mind,
That perfect, yea, that hallowed; and I end,
As I began, sole as the sun in Heaven.
Happy as Heaven have I, love, been with thee!
Thine innocent heart hath passed through a pure life,

Like a white dove, wing-sunned through the blue sky.
A better heart God never saved in Heaven.
She died as all the good die—blessing—hoping.
There are some hearts aloe-like, flower once, and die ;
And hers was of them.—Thrall art thou and free :
Free of immortal life though bound of death.
Not the emotional surface of the sea,
Whose form from things without is ta'en, but more
The deep essential quiet of its bed
Thy soul resembled in the pure profound.
Thy love to me was as the morning dew,
Earth's liquid jewellery, wrought of air,
Young nature's christening ; whose every bead,
Round as the globular genesis of things,
And bright as Heaven's own gems in diamond set,
Emblemed its pure perfection o'er this heart ;
Now sun parched, thunder scorched ; yet stricken thus,
Feeling myself each hour, each pulse I live,
More mightily drawn to join and glory in
All Being's everlasting sense of God.
I see the universe made clear with light,
Holy with spirit, pure with Deity ;
Man the dear son of God to God returned,
And earth's renascent nature throned in Heaven.
The voice of ages, syllabled in suns,
Pronounces God's unceasing benison
Upon His bright creation. Time is touched
On all hands by the Eternal ; and the world
Is bounded, rounded, ended but by Heaven.
Therefore the soul, in death resilient, looks,
Backwards to whence its impulse came, to God ;
And all things lovely and divine that here
It loved in spirit, are with it conjoined,
And mingled with the future of the stars,
And blissful occupation of all space.
As, pending time, the passed and future cause
Chief reasons, and the present but a point,
So in eternity all's presentness.
Hence therefore from me now all thoughts of earth ;
Be they as in a lake of lightning quenched ;
In lone annihilation lie entombed ;
And memory's pall be buried with the bier.

There lies my soul's love. Ah! all life hath ceased.
 And silence reads the dead world's burial tale.
 And Death sits quivering, there, and watering
 His great gaunt jaw at me. When must I die?

Lucifer. Say! dost thou feel to be mortal, or immortal!

Festus. Away!—and let me die alone.

Lucifer. I go:—

And I will come again: but spare thee, now,
 One hour, to think—

Festus. On all things. God, my God!
 One hour to sum a life's iniquities!—

One hour to fit me for eternity—

To make me up for judgment and for God!—

Only one hour to curse thee! Nay, for that,

There may be endless hours. God! I despair,—

And I am dying. Let me hold my breath!

I know not if I ever may draw another.

I feel Death blowing hard at the lamp of life.

My heart feels filling like a sinking boat;

It will soon be down—down. What will come of me?

It is as I always wished it;—I shall die

In darkness, and in silence, and alone.

Even my last wish is petted. God! I thank Thee;

It is the earnest of Thy coming—what?

Forgiveness? Let it be so: for I know not

What I have done to merit endless pain.

Is pleasure crime? Forbid it, God of bliss!

Who spurn at this world's pleasures, lie to God;

And shew they are not worthy of the next.

What are Thy joys we know not—nor can we

Come near Thee in Thy power, nor truth nor justice;

The nearest point wherein we come towards Thee,

Is loving—making love—and being happy.

Thou wilt not chronicle our sandlike sins;

For sin is small and mean and barren. Good,

Only, is great, and generous, and fruitful.

Number the mountains, not the sands, O God!

God will not look as we do on our deeds;

Nor yet as others. If He more condemn,

Shall He not more approve? A few fair deeds

Bedeck my life, like gilded cherubs on

A tomb, beneath which lies dust, decay, and darkness.

But each is better than the other thinks.
 Thank God ! man is not to be judged by man ;—
 Or, man by man the world would damn itself.
 What do I see ? It is the dead. They rise
 In clouds ! and clouds come sweeping from all sides,
 Upwards to God : and now they all are gone—
 Gone, in a moment, to eternity.
 But there is something near me.

Spirit.

It is I.

Festus. Go on ! I follow, when it is my time.

Not perfect yet the complement of Heaven.
 There is no shadow on the face of life :
 It is the noon of fate. Why may not I die ?
 Methinks I shall have yet to slay myself.
 I am calm now. Can this be the same heart
 Which, when it did sleep, slept from dizziness,
 And pure rapidity of passion, like
 The centre circlet of the whirlpool's wheel ?
 The earth is breaking up ; all things are thawing.
 River and mountain melt into their atoms ;
 A little time, and atoms will be all.
 The sea boils ; and the mountains rise and sink
 Like marble bubbles, bursting into death.
 O thou Hereafter ! on whose shore I stand—
 Waiting each toppling moment to engulf me—
 What am I ? Say, thou Present !—say, thou Past !
 Ye three wise children of Eternity !
 A life ?—a death ?—and an immortal ?—all ?
 Is this the threefold mystery of man ?
 The lower, darker Trinity of earth ?
 It is vain to ask. Nought answers me—not God.
 The air grows thick and dark. The sky comes down.
 The sun draws round him streaky clouds, like God
 Gleaning up wrath. Hope hath leapt off my heart,
 Like a false sibyl, fear smote, from her seat,
 And overturned it. I am bound to die.
 God ! why wilt Thou not save ? The great round world
 Hath wasted to a column beneath my feet.
 I will hurl me off it, then ; and search the depth
 Of space, in this one infinite plunge ! Farewell
 To earth, and Heaven and God ! Doom ! spread thy lap ;
 I come—I come. But no ! may God forbear,

To judge the tempted purpose of my heart!
Me hath He 'stablished here, and He will save;
And I can smile destruction in the face.
Let His strong hand compress the marble world,
And wring the starry fire-blood from its heart;
Still on this earth-core I rejoice in God;
I know Him and believe in Him as Love,
And this divinest truth He hath inspired,
Mercy to man is justice to Himself.
And oh! how infinitely kind to leave
My spirit but now one moment to reflect;
Reflect, without self-condemnation, how?
Like to the mighty leaves of light, shook off
Autumnal from the tree of Time, which strew
In stormy incandescence the sun's heart,
My thoughts, confusedly burning, waste away
This world-enlightener. Soul, what hast thou done?
Hast brought forth a new God, or all the Heavens
Stripped of their shining shams and shown the true?
Earth's spiritual idols hurled to hell?
Behold them, ghosts of gods, the evanishing reek
Of lights extinguished. I have seen them all
Huddled in Hades; lives that live no more
Fast fading into sheer nonentity.
Hast thou, with all things granted to thy wish,
Wrought out thy sovereign end, to warm the world
To worship, love, pure life, thy solar will?
Thy Heaven-wide mark, thine universal aim?
Alas! how futile action weighed 'gainst thought.
What mountainlike conceptions swell the mind!
What monumental molehills we achieve!
O grief, O woe, that I so much have thought
Of self; of God so little. Yet to know
Him, holy, gracious, giver of all good,
Forgiver of all evil, were surely enough
To sate the insatiable. In Him we rest,
Our spiritual universe, in Him
Move, as the self-revolving orbs in Heaven.
And O! thou strange mysterious universe,
Eternal, unconceived, star-studded Heaven,
Who art in God, and God in thee; and we
Of both, and in both, sovereign slaves of law,

Founded we know not or by whom, or how;
Canst thou not aid us to conceive ourselves,
Atoms of thine entirety, double-natured,
But powerless separate, seeing only this;
Matter, if indestructible, always was,
And aye must be; mind, too, if force defined;
And though immortal both, yet vital only
And individual, when by laws combined?
What then? Are unintelligent laws alone
The rulers of the universe, and God
A metaphysic fiction; am I God;
As bud, tree rudimental? As a seal's
Reverse impression, signifying yet
One only meaning, spelling one same word?
As part material, objective to God?
As immaterial, subjective with Him?
As thus, of both symbolic, in myself,
An abstract of the infinite, the whole?
No difference 'tween the All and God, but this,
Active and passive Deity! O man!
O sacred nature, all divine! In vain
We seek more light than that we see by. Nought
Explains death but death, nor life but life;
Whether perpetuate in more brilliant spheres,
Or fined and heightened simply into Heaven;
Communion with the spirit of infinite life,
All present reason, and eternal right,
Hailed by each natural mind as God, the good,
The wise, the holy, the all-blessing. Hence,
God is to man both God unknown and known.
The known we love; but the unknown, although
We named it non-existent, still we fear;
And fearing everything, fear nothing most.
As 'mid sky-crowning halo, the wan moon,
Like an enchantress in her charmed ring,
By recusant daemons scared, her wheel of light
Widens, to fend her from wind-striding storms,
Threatful of death, in vain; she knows all; sees
The coming cloud which blots her out of Heaven;
So, too, my soul, affrayed, but firm, foreknows
The fatal end of all things. Yet, why fear?
Great Nature is my mother and my friend;

When God comes down from Heaven He dwells with her.
 Hers is the house of mourning and of mirth ;
 Feasting and fasting go on side by side ;
 The song of bridals and the dirge of death,
 And wail of birth, are aye beneath her roof.
 She brings her children to their Father's knee.
 These He rebukes, rewards those ; judges all.
 To all He shews their union with Himself,
 And those He loves best, takes from time to time
 Back to His heavenly hall. Thus, now we know,
 As 'tween the sun and earth light's spectral bond
 Proves both like-essenced, concrete of one force
 Reduplicate, parental ; so we find
 The elemental thoughts of God and man
 One ; the same self-constituent truths are ours.
 Ours is His justice, His our love, though based
 On grander and more sure foundations ; Heaven
 We share in doing good and willing well ;
 In blessing, bettering, pardoning others here,
 His universal throne.

Guardian Angel. Go, reign with Him.

Festus. My confessor art Thou, O God, alone.
 Soon all the shews of nature shall depart,
 And nought that is not unified with God,
 Goodness and love, and righteousness and peace,
 Yea, nought but the eternal be for aye.
 He His hand opened and the world was born.
 He shuts it, and the essential nothingness
 Embodied, dies its everlasting death,
 The infinite conclusion of all things.
 Open thine arms, O death ! thou fine of woe
 And warrant of bliss ! I feel the last
 Red mountainous remnant of the earth give way.
 The stars are rushing upwards to the light ;
 My limbs are light, and liberty is mine.
 The spirit's infinite purity consumes
 The sullied soul. Eternal destiny
 Opens its bright abyss. I am God's !

God.

Man, die !

SCENE—*The Skies.*

ANGELS, ANGEL OF EARTH, and LUCIFER.

God. The age of matter consummates itself.
 All things that are shall end, save that is mine.
 As with one world, so shall it be with all;
 For all are human, fallible, and false,—
 As creature towards Creator must be aye.
 But for the whole prepare ye, not the less
 Grade upon grade of glory, sons of God!
 The world begins and ends with Paradise,
 The garden and the City of the blest;
 Begins with Paradise and ends with Heaven.
 And earth shall live again, and like her sons
 Have resurrection to a brighter being;
 And waken like a bride, or like a morning,
 With a long blush of love to a new life.
 Another race of souls shall rule in her,
 Creatures all loving, beautiful, and holy.
 Go, angel! guide her as before through heaven.

Angel of Earth. On! on! my world again!

Away we fly
 Through Heaven's blue plain,
 Like thought through the eye.
 Ye angels keep your Heaven!
 I earth. For that with God I have striven,
 And have prevailed. I come once more,
 I come to thee, earth!
 Like a ship to shore.

Lucifer. Have not I triumphed o'er the earth that was?

God. Prince of the powers of air! thy doom is nigh.
 The prison place of spirits is for thee—
 As for all others thou hast wronged, for a time—
 But those who by my favour die not. Him
 Conduct, ye angels, into Hades; there
 To wait my will while the world's Sabbath lasts.

SCENE—*Angel World.*

THE ANGEL OF EARTH, LUNIEL, ANGELS, and SAINTS.

Angel of Earth. God and the world one Holy family ;
The houses of the Heavens and Earth allied ;
That was the prophecy, and this the proof ;
Love the beginning of the great return.

Luniel. I had a happy vision yesternight.
Methought I saw the gathering of all tribes
Of men returning out of dateless death,
Unto the Holy land, the land of life.

Saints. We saw it likewise ; we, yea, all of us,
And heard the Angels sing : far up mid Heaven
Their blessed words resounded, of our thoughts
The pure celestial echoes ; this their hymn.

They come from the ends of the earth,
White with its aged snows ;
From the bounding breast of the tropic tide,
Where the day-beam ever glows ;
From the east where first they dwelt,
From the north, and the south, and the west,
Where the sun puts on his robe of light,
And lays down his crown to rest.

Out of every land they come ;
Where the palm triumphant grows,
Where the vine overshadows the roofs and the hills,
And the gold orbéd orange glows :
Where the olive and fig-tree thrive,
And the rich pomegranates red,
Where the citron blooms, and the apple of ill
Bows down its fragrant head.

From the lands where the gems are born ;
Opal and emerald bright ;
From shores where the ruddy corals grow,
And pearls with their mellow light ;
Where silver and gold are dug,
And the diamond rivers roll,
And the marble white as the still moonlight
Is quarried, and jetty coal ;—

They come—with a gladdening shout ;
They come—with a tear of joy ;
Father and daughter, youth and maid,
Mother and blooming boy.

A thousand dwellings they leave,
 Dwellings—but not a home ;
 To them there is none but the sacred soil,
 And the land whereto they come.

And the Temple again shall be built,
 And filled as it was of yore ;
 And the burden be lift from the heart of the world,
 And the nations all adore ;
 Prayers to the throne of Heaven
 Morning and eve shall rise,
 And unto and not of the Lamb
 Shall be the sacrifice.

Angel of Earth. As isles, disjoined by superficial deeps,
 Yet rooted stand in unity with worlds ;
 So with the interior continent of Heaven,
 Earth and its own.

Saints. Now know we the whole world
 The land of Heavenly commerce, where both kinds
 Of men and angels mix with mutual gain ;
 With knowledge, and with wisdom, and with joy
 Flowing ; the final festival of Time.

Luniel. The final form which perfect faith shall wear,
 Is worship of, and in, the Holy spirit,
 The Everlasting Wisdom throned with God ;
 With whom is all Salvation of all kinds,
 Sinner and Saint, one world completing plan.

Saints. O holy Angel, warden of the world,
 Who guidedst its first footsteps o'er the path,
 Untried of newest space, well trodden now,
 Which round the sun it circleth ; and thou, too,
 Serenest of all angels, fairest, first,
 Of those here culled, the flower of Heaven's bright hosts,
 Who knowest the heart of truth, and well may'st smile
 At legends of the birth of sun and stars,
 The atomic ancestries of elements,
 And infantile antiquity of Time,—
 We in this sphere rejoice that with ye we
 The truth possess and glory in. Do thou
 Speak then, who canst, bright angel guide of earth,
 If leisure thine, whose long experience tends
 Far past the immediate parentage of Time,
 Into eternal æons, what to us
 The Godblessed words may prove of living light.

Instruct us in the wisdom of the Heavens,
 At once the gate and goal of the true life
 The empyrean shadows, so that we,
 Like self obedient elements, which contain
 Their total laws and partial liberties,
 The reign of God may honour in all spheres,
 And act therewith concordantly, as here.

Angel of Earth. As when one wise in Nature's ways of
 old,

Gazing through optie lens, Heaven's spatial plains,
 Perceives that what to naked eye black blanks
 Unfathomable, and lonesome adits seemed
 From universe to universe, were in truth
 Crowded with suns; so, too, created mind,
 Scanning the depths of Deity, must confess,
 When by His will enlightened, that what shews
 As mere inexplicable judgment, fate,
 Imposed by arbitrary ruler, first,
 Proves, rightly known, of good and glory full,
 As firmamental fields with orbs of life.
 The sphere I mourned as mine to ruin doomed,
 God hath restored to Being, and newly dowered
 With life, and holy soul, transformed, it beams
 Self-shining. And, recipient of all bliss
 Unmerited, unmeasured she the like
 Imparts to all who in her hallowed light,
 Gladden. Thereto, I now; God bidden to tend.

Luniel. The issue of all ages is at hand.

Angel of Earth. But as all sacred spirits delight to tell
 And hear the triumphs of eternal good,
 O! hearken, all ye blessed of our Lord,
 And ye shall know the wondrous deeds He hath done,
 In highest, happiest worlds, as now in this.
 For infinitely various are the ways
 Wherein God conquers evil; at one time
 Slowly eradicating, line by line,
 Its fatal features, and again, by one
 Annihilative word, destroying it,
 For ever and for ever and for aye.
 It was a holy festival in Heaven,
 A joy of satisfaction at the close
 Of some divinest epoch of the world.

Far round the infinite extremes of space
Star unto star spake gladness, as they sped
On their resplendent courses, and a smile,
Enkindling on the countenances of the suns,
Thrilled to the heart of nature : while there rose,
Expressive of divine felicity,
A clear bright strain of music, like a braid
Of silver round a maiden's raiment, all
Imbounding and adorning. There, in one
Of those most pure and happy stars which claim
Identity with Heaven, high raised in bliss,
Each lofty spirit luminous with delight,
Sat God's selectest angels, gathered round
The golden board of that palatial orb,
In spherul order. All the fruitage there
Of the immortal Eden, and the land
Of everlasting Light to please the sense
And satisfy the soul, the Tree of Life
In all its bright varieties could yield,
Was lavished ; and its fragrance filled the skies.
The bright blue wine as though expressed from Heaven
Glittering with life went, moonlike, round and round,
Times sacredly repeated 'mong the gods
And spirits who had each one earned his star,
In that divinest conclave, as they held
Deep commune on the wondrous end imposed
By the Eternal Saviour of the world
Upon His infinite work ;—and all the harps,
Intwined about with nectar-dropping flowers,
Which wither not though culled, but on the brow
Or in the bosom bloom as in their fields—
Were trembling into silence, when there stepped,
Unseen before, into the joyous midst
Of that bright throng, surprised in holy ease,
A young and shining Angel. In his air
Sat kingly sweetness, kind and calm command,
Yet with long suffering blended ; for the soil
Of dust was on his garb and sandalled sole ;
Dust on the locks of fertile gold which flowed
From his fair forehead rippling round his neck ;
Bedropped, defiled, with cold and cave-like dew.
One hand a staff of virent emerald held,

As 'twere a sapling of the tree of life;
And one smoothed in his breast a radiant dove
Fluttering its wings in lightnings thousand-hued,
The sole companion of his pilgrimage.
Silent he stood and gazed. The angels straight
Rose from their pearly seats inwreathed with gems
And priceless azure from the morning's mine,
And bowed the head and stretched the hand, ere yet
One welcoming word were uttered. Wine and bread—
Bread made of golden wheat—and wine of life—
Such only as immortal virtues use,
Before the guest were set; and cool white robes
The angels gave him, floating halo-like
With fleecy glistening round his fainting limbs.
Twain of the Thrones at once their seats resigned;
Ministrant Princedoms sang again the strain
Which fills the halls of hospitable Heaven,
When that the holy enter, or the sons
Of Light hold high and hallowed festival.
Then spake the cherub chiefest of them all—
Bright Angel! from whatever sphere arrived,
Supernal and celestial, or some orb
Far off, of starry nature,—for the toil
Meseems, of travel, weighed upon ye erst,—
Now cheerily relieved,—instruct us, pray,
Who here assembled sit to celebrate,
By kind commission of our Lord, His love,
If we in aught thine ends can further aid
Or serve in thine intents, as fain we would.
For all, we know, is holy enters here,
By virtue of our King; and we, prepared
Again for sacred action, instant are.
Thus he his seat resuming, while a glance
Of bland approof beamed forth from every eye,
Wise reticence still reining-in each tongue.
Answered the stranger angel, rising slow,
Sunlike, from out his seat of clouded gold;
O kind! O noble natures! well ye work
Your ministry of love, who thus pour forth
Unmeasured, unconditioned, your divine
Riches of works and words, that all who come,
Whether by invitation or by need,

May of the Sovereign's bounty, whom ye serve,
Like honour with His chosen friends, receive ;
Accept these thanks, this blessing !—As he ceased,
The air became all incense, and the skies,
As though endowed with native sunlife, showered
Around on all their iridescent smiles.
Oh not to us, rejoined the cherub host,
Be gratitude for duty barely done ;
All honour is our Lord's. To him we owe
This gracious exaltation o'er the world,
Wherein His love sustains us ; His, who first
By one Omnipotent Fiat breathed us forth ;
Who, out of awful non-existence, us
Translated into life, and turned our souls
To angel constellations, ranging free
Through all the eternal liberties of Light.
But if thou wilt, oh say, most holy guest !
Whom we account us blessed to receive,
While yet the day doth solemnize the skies,
Wherefore thou hither comest,—how treated else
In other worlds, and whither now ; so we,
Haply, may wisdom gather from thy words
Or help afford by deeds. Then once again
That radiant youth, immortal as the morn,
Rose from the Crown of Heaven, and bending low
Spake with a soft, bright utterance, like the voice
Of very silence musing ;—so serene
His parlance, and his audience so attent.
O happy angels, heavenly and divine,
To whom nor sin, nor sigh, nor tear, nor woe,
Not even in imagination, come ;
And whose free lives in blessed obedience pass
To one law pure, and sole—the law of love—
How shall ye hear, or I relate, the griefs
Of orbs disrupted and of spirits dyed
In blackest sin—of God's high rule reject—
His own deputed, exiled—rudely thrust
From ancient throne and old dynastic calm
Thought steadfast and eterne—and through the blank
Of lifeless night compelled to wander ; where,
But that afar he caught the friendly glance
Of your extreme and most felicitous star,

He might perchance have wandered still ; but since
A gracious ear to stranger's plaint be yours,
Let me, in briefest wise, recount the deeds
Of worlds far distant, wherewithal mine own
Be somewhat, and not wholly dimly blent ;
That ye in joy thus fortified, may thanks
Give for your peaceful lot, and further bless
God, who hath put it in your hearts to share
Those bounties with the stranger, ye enjoy.
To Him be praise and worship in all worlds !—
Beyond the ken of angels, in the midst
Of a bright ring of worlds, an orb there is—
There is—ah me ! there was—an orb of light,
Once all mine own. In Heaven mine Angel-sire—
Such blest relations are, ye know, in Heaven—
Abode, and ruled in glory many a tribe
Elect of choicest virtues, He Himself
Sovereign and head of all cherubic thrones ;
Abiel his name, mine Beniel, known on high
His sole Son ; and ye all are sons of God.
This orb, I, trusted with supremest powers,
Paternal love could lend, myself had framed,
Myself with life endowed and loving things.
All life is sacred in its kind to Heaven,
And all things holy, beautiful, and good.
There angels dwelled as in the bosom of bliss ;
Peace, piety, and innocence, and joy
Made up the square of Being. Worship was
The very air they lived in, righteousness
The ground they trode and builded on. A land
It shewed of fountains, flowers, and honeyed fruits,
Of cool green umbrage, and incessant sun ;—
The rainbow there in permanent splendour spanned
The skies by ne'er a cloud deformed, of hue
Sternier than amber ; while on every hand
The clear blue streams singing and sparkling ran
The bloomy meads to fertilize ; while some
With honey, nectar, manna, milk and wine,
Fit for angelic sustenance slow flowed.
Here palaces and cities, midst of groves,
Like giant jewels set in emerald rings ;
There, too, the bowery coverture of woods,

Ancient and dense, laced with all-tinted flowers,
Wherein were wont to sojourn in all peace,
Lamb, lion, eagle, ox, dove, serpent, goat,
And snow-white hart, each sacred animal
Cleansed from all evil quality, sin-instilled,
Speaking one common tongue, and gathered oft
In wisest parley, 'neath the sacred tree
Centring each mazy pleasance, intersect
With an invisible bound ; so sweet the force
Of nature, heavenly sanctioned. All went well
For many a sunny cycle. Year by year
The souls of all things there were ripening fast
To spirit-like perfection ; day by day
Grew spirithood to deathless angel kind ;
Angelic nature to Divine estate.
It seemed a happy contest which of all
Should happiest be. Among that heavenly race
Abode two angel-sisters, nymphs divine,
The daughters of the Lord of gods and men,
Star-dowered, light-portioned, forms full realized
Of the Eternal Beauty. Yet how unlike
Their nature, and their loveliness ; in one
A soul of lofty clearness, like a night
Of stars, wherein the memory of the day
Seems trembling through the meditative air—
In whose proud eye one fixed and arklike thought
Held only sway ; that thought a mystery ;
In one, a golden aspect like the dawn,
Beaming perennial in the Heavenly east,
Of paly light ; she ever brightening looked,
As with the boundless promise unfulfilled
Of some supreme perfection ; in her heart
That promise aye predestinate, alway sure,
Her breast with joy suffusing ; and so wrought,
Her sigh seemed happier than her sister's smile :
Yet patient she and humble. Of these twain
The elder my betrothed was, to me
In antemundane ages, by my sire,
As of like royal issue with myself,
And seed divine reserved ; yet so disposed
Of this bright orb the triple herison,
That ere the elder entered on the whole,

The younger should the fair domain enjoy
Of her own chosen portion and delight.
Such the decree forestablished from of old.
Who shall gainsay the will supreme of God ?
For both He loved right well, but for my sake
The first the best, with whom was most secured
The bliss of all. The younger now had reigned
In meekest wise for many a moonlike age
O'er her select dominion ; and delight
Leapt up its highest, when the news made known
By Wisdom, their high governante, spread abroad
Of nuptials nearing celebration. Vast
And rich in festive splendour were commenced
The sacred preparations : every heart
Impatient for the high propitious hour
When the Bride Queen of their own angel race
With me enthroned should sit, and rule with me.
Midst all this, suddenly a stranger star,
Swordlike in shape, as waved by hand unseen,
Far off in space appeared ; eclipsing swift
All lesser, nearer lights which nature shewed.
So rapidly from end to end it flew
Of Heaven's horizon—even as though it scorned
The quiet skies of that extatic sphere
I spake of—that the third night it had vanished
Into the unknown infinite below ;
When to their wondering eyes the morrow morn,
Waked out of darkness into daily light,
A marvel mightier than the sworded star—
Which I alone perceived the Evil one
Had there unsheathed in Heaven, where late it flamed—
Behold, was present. Bands of angels—whence
Was known not—thronged the groves and palaces
Which decked our paradisaal world, in air
And aspect, fair yet foreign, and distinct
Their every action with a shining grace
Which like a lodestar chained, unfelt, the eye ;
And made their loveliness, exceeding far
The holy beauty of the original tribes—
Erstwhile so happy—fatal. For these first
The heart divided, once entirely God's,
Whole and without a flaw ! first tuned their lyres

To angel love alone, but half divine ;
First taught to separate self from Deity.
Yet seemed they not to teach but rather fled
All serious converse and instruction, soon
Curtailing worship and prolonging rest :
As though true worship were not union high
With the Great Lord and universal Good,
Worthy of worship ceaseless and by all.
These after mingling, as by chance or choice
In holy celebrations, when first asked
Their rank to name, and order, made reply
They were the youngest offspring of the Heavens,
Children of bliss and knowledge, richly dowered
With singular joys and rare immunities ;—
That they were spirits of freedom, and their suit
And servage voluntary, whence alone
Budded what little merit they possessed ;
As otherwise their gracious Lord, they said,
Were mocked with forced compliance ; that all good
Sprang from the natural impulse of their souls,
And the proud pleasure of pure liberty ;
That they the measure of the skies fulfilled ;
The complement of all extremes of light ;
Of all celestial essence they the sum ;
And after them was nothing ;—which to preach
Of their own selves was their sole business there,
Wandering where'er to wander pleased them best.
Like, but unequal, as the eye to Heaven,
Errors the shape of truths put on ; as clouds
The forms of isles and continents assume,
From whence they sprang, suspended in the skies.
With such like words, so falsely seeming true,
And ofttimes urged, were many led aside
To question—doubt—deny—at last, cast off
The holy law, ordained of Deity,
Which makes His love sustaining Spirit alone
The cause and reason of all righteousness,
All peace, all bliss ; freewill the synonyme
Of selfish nature as opposed to God,
Blown up with self conceived deserts, and proud
To prove its own an independent power,
Held, in duality, with Him on high.

Vain, foolish, impious thought for aye begone ;
With all things false and foul for ever cease !—
These, by divine permission, to myself
Such secretly confided, to the end
Which ye ere long shall wot of, presently
Seceded,—yet remained on outward terms
With their unshaken brethren as before.
But oh ! the absolute excellence was gone,
The plane of pure perfection broken through ;
It was as though some galaxy of stars
Had sunk and left a horrid rent in Heaven,
A ragged flaw athwart the sapphirine floor,
A foul chaotic chasm. Still further spread
As from some central and impulsive point
In ceaseless radiation, day and night,
Fresh errors, and reiterate wrongs and jars.
In vain I throned myself in judgment hall,
Uttering decrees predestined as of yore ;
In vain I walked among them, beckoning back
Such as in false society had strayed :
In vain I warned of evil ; shewed them all
How God's exterminating judgments fell
Ever on sin, with woe to whom they came.
The testimony came to all in vain.
The disaffection spread. Oh ! still I weep
Recalling that declension, sad and wide !—
By unsuspected frankness, having gained
Free access soon to the imperial Bride,
The strangers next their machinations plied
Against the holy guide and nurse divine,
Immortal Wisdom, 'neath whose bounteous care
Had grown those angel sisters, since their birth
In the arcanest Heavens. Her, soon, alas !
The wily wanderers whispered first away,
From wonted inculcation of deep lore
And holy truths, as narrowing down the souls
And marring the free actions and intents
Of the angelic pair ; to which base cheat
The elder—not the wiser—won too well
By much and false persuasion, at the last,
Gave in nor rued till after ; so mistaught
To gladden at the lack of all restraint

Upon the natural world-commanding will.
Not so the younger, who, with tears profuse,
Grieved at the doom of parting from her guide,
The severance from her holy tutelage,
And losing of the golden words of life
Which her instructress taught her, who instilled
Into her soul the sacred elements
Of universal truth ; and gave to taste,
In prelibation of supremest bliss,
The essence of all knowledge. God, she taught,
Himself was truth and justice, good and love,
The infinite reality, the one ;
Out of the unknown darkness of the depths
Of His great Being all existence sprang,
In various forms and multitudinous spheres,
Innumerable as the atoms of the light,
Or as the sands Time's mighty year-glass holds,
Though it comprise all deserts ; that with Him
All nature's vast and elemental limbs
Are but the organs of His will, Himself
Above all bound, above all infinite ;
Whose action is all freedom—whose repose
Necessity—whose only word is Fate ;
With Him alone, she taught, was peace and bliss :
The bliss of Being is the love of God—
And primal beauty and eternal joy,
Whereof the vital music of all orbs
Forms but the faintest echo ; and the sign
Minutest of His high celestial will
To harmonize creation, and reduce
The pure perennial war of good and ill,
Into the musical peace which rules in Heaven—
Peace, victress of all war. For so, in Time,
The one and many make themselves the all ;—
Beauty, the boundless medium, Love the end
Immutable, which renders all things one ;—
And though in outer worlds an outward war
There is, yet in the spiritual world,
The secret harmony of good and ill,
Which Being with existence reconciles
In the mid axis of necessity—
Prevails and hallows finally the whole.

So Wisdom made her favourite wise of heart,
And led the loved one through all holy spheres
And dwellings of seraphic bliss, and homes
Of perfect pleasure—even as the sun
Wades through the golden waters of the world
Up to the top point of the tower of Time,
Then steep descends—down to the lowest nook
Of furthest space, where earth spins round like clay
Upon the potter's wheel, the orb where bode
The last of happy beings, and the first
Of wretched creatures—semimortal man—
Whose clay was tempered with a lymph divine,
The ante-natal wave of Paradise,
And fourfold fount of nature's heavenly flow ;
Yet so self-hidden in the cloud of sin—
So misadvised by those whose souls perfused
With earth-pent vapours and the reek of time,
Falsely oracular sit and agonize,
Preaching perdition—that though high in Heaven
The sunsmile of Salvation beamed, it beamed
Unrecognized—unrecked of—undivined.
Still after all these wanderings, knowing well
One single soul more wondrous than all worlds
Which mass the skies with miracles of light,
They rapture most and sweet contentment found,
Coolly triumphant, like the restful stars
Glowing in Heaven when Time's hot day is done,
Each in their proper orb and common sphere ;
To meditative converse most devote,
And strict collation of the Spirit-book
With the pretemporal volume, writ of God ;
High in the archives of eternity
Treasured, the pure original of life.
The elder Excellence, meanwhile, who longed
For pure and mere autocracy, unchecked—
Unled—uncyed—ruled with a random hand,
And an occasional sovereignty the all
But full totality, allotted her,
Of the original myriads of her race.
These loved her well ; and, willingly, themselves
Ascribed to her for ever, for that she
Gave them all freedom, wherefore in return

They were her slaves in gratitude : and ripe
Any desire to grant or scheme abet,
Which pleased herself, or those intent to please.
Counsel, however sage, and precept fair,
Which seemed to savour of superior will,
Or tendency to better ends than theirs,
Were treason held at last, and Wisdom's words,
Bewrayed by guile, into a net were wrought,
For her own shining feet ;—alas, the day !
Long was a pretext sought, and baffled oft ;
But never failure followed ill intent,
And base success still sealed each fatal plot.
The hour of parting came and Wisdom wrung
Her high uplifted hands—nor breathed—unless
To her she loved, that youthful saint—farewell ;—
Which well she wist were but a mock to make
Of valediction. How could that she left,
By any chance, fare well ? Yet still she stayed
Lingering around that once supremest sphere
Where, with the sister angels of her care,
In days of holy innocence and love,
She was of Eld so happy. Oft she made
For flight, but pausing, dropped ; and thus consumed
Her last night there, till every star had waned
Into the coming light ; and then her way
Upon her own bright wings she took to Heaven.
The vanishing flash of her æonian wing
Called forth a burst of triumph from the train
Of those insinuant tempters, as they marked—
What close in deep divan they long had hoped ;
And toward the elder of the angel twain,
Those regal nymphs, inheritors of Heaven,
Laden with crown, and robe, and sceptre, rushed
Tumultuous—and applausive, hailed her thus.
Be thou our Queen, O lofty angel fair !
Worthy the sole and unobstructed rule
Of every sphere and every spirit race ;
Heart-honoured—Heaven-ordained—predestined heir
Of the bright line of ages numberless !
Since God, creating atoms, first began,
And ended with the universal world,
Thou hast beheld no equal, nay, no like.

Thou only we acknowledge, and for this,
Hold our arrival blessed. Empress, hail!—
Then she elate, and with pride-blinded soul
The towering seat, prepared for her, assumed—
And sat a sceptred monarch. Far and wide
The tidings flew that I and all my rule
Were thrust aside ; and in the judgment seat
I sat and none attended ; or but came,
With false fictitious cause, to scoff and jeer.
Then came an edict of perpetual ban
And forcible exile 'gainst myself, and all
Who dared the fallen fortunes to support,
Or but to name as lawful. Thus the sword,
Whose fiery emblem glared at first in air,
Reigned, and divided all things. Every gate
Of every temple straight was closed—and lo !
Each high and heaven-allusive dome was filled
With hollow sounding emptiness alone.
Once—in the midst of their assembly high,
And in the palace hall, where erst were held
The courts of joy and audiences of love,—
Once I essayed to speak and hearing hoped.
But, ere a word, they bound me by the hands,
And drave me out with curses, taunts, and gibes.
Passing, thus manacled, the new made throne
Where sat the crownéd traitress, of her crime
Conscious, and trembling 'mid the array of state
That girt her in, brightly, I spake ;—but not
In anger nor revenge ; for I foresaw
The wretched end of all such mortal sin,
And knew the holy purposes of Heaven
Alone eternal and essential good ;—
Behold me thus ; I quit thee ; 'tis thy will.
Me thou forswarest, who had loved thee more
Than all the tribes of angels, love thee still,
Despite the flatteries wherewith now thy soul
Is darkened and degraded. Know me true.
The hour will come when thou shalt hold me yet
Dearer than now detested ; but 'tis thou
Shalt change, not I. Watch, for I come again.
She answered with a smile, but trembled whilst ;
And I departed that unhallowed hall.

In this, too, God permitted them success—
And in far more, that at the close He might
Their highest height o’ertop, and with the arms
Of love, all-conquering, fling forth more supreme
His thrice victorious standard. Such His will;
Such, even in exile, now, the due, the dear
Obedience of my heart; for well I knew
To change, or re-create, with Him perdured
As facile as to make. The younger angel maid
Who dauntless kept her faith, and still with me
Held sad and sacred commune—though by stealth—
Was suffered to remain, close cloistered first,
In solitude religious, for, that they
The Empress’ mind who swayed, dared not advise
To put her quite to death; and that the tie
And natural sympathy of sisterhood,
The memory of the excellent times of old,
And flickering purposes of future years
Which played about the heart of her enthroned,
Together, wrought to spare her and preserve.
Anon, though bidden to busy herself alone
With her own matters, and those mixed with them—
She, at convenient times, permission wrung
To walk abroad and tend her charities;
But only in the humblest, homeliest guise.
And as the Queen had shrunk not to abjure
All past—all present—and all future love,
Between her and myself—her whilom Lord—
The younger, in derision, they who mocked
Both, called the Bride Expectant and the Spouse.
Now, what a change came o’er that orb serene!
Through all the day was revelry and mirth—
Nor respite knew the night, till no one recked
Of natural order or of dues divine.
While the neglected damsel at the gates
Of her imperious sister—at whose beck
All luxuries started into life and use;—
In servile garb, and oft with ashes crowned
As in contempt, an outcast sat forlorn.
O royal menial! O imperial thrall!
Companion of the angels in their height,
How lowly art thou fallen; and yet how pure,

Seen in the sin consuming light of God—
How meek—how perfect in all servitude!—
These contumelies and worse, unvexed, she bore
Unheeding, uncomplaining. Day by day—
Her to impress with due sense of disgrace,
Was she led in, before the obsequious crowd,
In sackcloth clad, to make obeisance meet
Unto the Sisterly Majesty, which she
Coldly, for peace-sake, made; nor all hope lacked
That some few gold-grains Time might number still
Among the barren sands he measured forth;—
That Wisdom yet might wonn with them again;
And her usurping sister, still beloved,
Though for this deed condemned, her seat resign
To the diviner dynasty. In this
Hope she survived, nor wholly stood alone.
While all—almost—in that strange change of rule
And law agreed, a certain few there were
Nathless, within whose hearts the echoes staid
Of those last words I uttered; and these found
Joy unconceived in hoping still they might
In act be verified; and oft—as best
They could—they comforted the angel child.
Daily and nightly, she upon her knees,
Besought God to rekindle, in the hot
And blinding darkness of her heart who ruled,
The lovelight of His presence, and to quench
The desolating river of their wrath—
Who first infested that fair world with sin.
At night too, in the wilderness we met—
For what was once a garden shewed but then
A drear and desert world: and there from her,
I, banished—learned what things and how befel:
And me she never left without a prayer—
Despite the wrongs I suffered with herself,
Wrongs which too many loudly joyed to hear—
That I for all would pray and intercede.
There were who spared not breath to shew, that she
Strove in my heart her sister to supplant;
Though I, who knew her well, knew better far—
And, for that she was faithful, sought to bound
All blessing in herself—and circumscribe,

Through forfeiture o. infidelity,
The promise made to both, of highest bliss,
Which from their birthplace they had brought with them:
And writ in silvery phylacteries hung—
In the one openly, the other hid,
As though ashamed thereof—around their brows;
That so they might be known—those twins divine—
The daughters of the Most High God. To each
As creatural life, was trial still decreed,
That they might know to relish good and joy—
The woe of saintly innocence accused—
The purifying suffering of sin.
Yet such—although they knew not this—that both
Should vanish, and good only and pure joy
Encrown each other finally. In all
Worlds there are truths and secrets only known
And justifiable, to Him who laid
Their sure foundations; trembling though they stand
Upon the countless columns of the air.
By secret instigation thus the heart
Was poisoned, of the Angel Queen, to shun
And doubt her innocent sister. Time by time
Such imputations cast, failed not to work
Wrath in the royal breast, though reckless all
Of former love, or future. 'Twas enough
So proud presumption were but whispered round;
Thus visited. Within the central square
Fronting the glittering palace stood the throne—
Which changed so much the aspect of that orb,
And which I told of first—whereon each day
She, ministering blind justice sat, absorbed
In love of her own empery; rapt to hear
The adulation of her foreign train!
To trifle with her sceptre as a toy,
And court the rainbow flashes, startling bright,
Of the star-gemmed tiara; to her eyes
Jewels well worth the satrapies of Heaven;—
Rich in all fancied virtues to attract
Good, or from evil fend; the which same gems
She oft would deftly moralize, and prove
To the subservient glozers ranged around,
How well they did become her, how much stead

The breast, the brow whereon they dazzling lay ;
Now gleaming forth defiant, now reposed
In silent capabilities of light.
There, in her radiant siege, that angel Queen—
What time the Sister, so abased as wont
Meekly came forth in pale humility,
Low bending like the crescent moon, when first
Born of the golden calm the western sky
Rejoiceth in, prophetic, to perform
Duc reverence—sat, and eyed askance ; then spake
While o'er her head attendants from behind—
Pavonian canopy of azure held,
In manner of a sunshade, her to screen
From the high glory that would else have slain :—
Fair seeming Sister, is it true that thou—
In my default—aspirest to espouse
The angel prince, my sometime lord and lover,
He exiled, thou in bonds ? If so, content.
Ye well befit each other, and so far
As merits make, are equal, in my mind.
Answered the younger of the twain divine.
O heavenly consort !—O affianced bride
Of God's own Son ! Be there 'tween thee and me,
Nor struggle, nor misdoubt. They both malign,
Who sow the seeds of discord broad-cast here.
We each have our forenoted lot. Be mine—
The power, the privilege of servitude.
Be thine, command. My faith can never change.
But thou hast fallen from service to a throne.
Though he who ever loves, nor swerves from that
His heart hath fixed on once—with me consort,
It is but for a season ; and our talk
Is of thee always. Countless prayers are thine.
I, too, have my devotions, and serve God,
Doubtless, although I worship not with thee,
Replied the elder, bowing from her throne ;
We worship each our star, but all in Heaven.
We may not worship but the Invisible ;—
Answered the younger, firm. No matter, now !
Rejoined the angel monarch, smiling bright
On her confederated beguilers round :
Who smoothly sanctioned every pearly word

That beauteous and imperial rebel spake ;—
My temple is my heart. My seat is fixed
Here in the midst of friends ; and by this crown—
Each gem a sacred talisman of power,
Or amulet protective from all harm,—
Wrought by the spirits of the elements,
And wondrously endowed,—I swear, and be
The oath, as death, irrevocable—I,
The dull alliance ye design abjure.
Nor Lord, nor living equal shall be mine.
Depart, and let him know our fixed resolve.
Incipient murmurs of applause ran round
The lustrous throng—when lo ! an omen strange.
While yet she spake, the jewels of her crown
Erewhile obtested, in the sight of all
Dropped, several, down,—a sadly splendid lapse
Like meteor showers autumnal in the skies,—
Whose fancied virtues in her false esteem
Were that which made her royal ; down they fell,
And but enriched the dust. With deep dismay
She eyed the empty sockets—and was still.
Stricken with shame, too, slowly slid away
The parasitic court. The younger, then,
Who at her sister's feet her seat still sought ;—
O Sister ! O divine one ! O most dear !
There is a jewel more than worth all these—
These but the shining rubbish of a wreck.
Wilt thou not seek it ? 'Tis, for asking, thine.
A friend there is—a lover—one most true,
Who would not thus desert thee, though it had been
Thyself, by judgment, hurled into the dust—
But there he would have comforted thee. No more !
Said the haught Empress, I have cast my lot ;—
Then hurried from her throne and disappeared.
Next came the crime of crimes with curses crowned,
Staggering precipitate. No lack was there
Of direful sign and portent ; chief was this—
Each day grew murker, for the light of truth
Suns those serenest firmaments ; and all
The falsehoods each one uttered, lie by lie,
Rolled into rings of darkness round their heads—
'Till the conglomerate gloom obscured the day,

And each one so infringed the other's view
That contact in collision ceased. And still,
With gathering shades the stranger spirits grew
Still lovelier, and, like light outletting flowers,
Glowed in the lengthening eve; and oft at night
As the stars streamed their silver radiance forth—
Alternating with azure and all gems—
Or as in nacrine blent in one soft blaze,
Their rosy bowers they trimmed; and training low
The honeyed wreaths, heavy with odorous dew,—
Warbled a vesper song, inviting mirth
And amicable converse in the shade.
There likewise they averred to serve their God—
Whose living emblem dwelled, they said, among them—
With natural worship and symbolic rites
Of souls regenerated; there impart
The esoteric truths which nature veiled,
Of the one triplicative essence; there—
All cosmogonic and theurgic lore,
Without consideration, open free
To the enraptured eye—and but for one
Prostration of the spirit duly made,
The sacred fire and secrets of the stars.
Night after night these proffers were proclaimed—
And mysteries more enchanting still, with smiles,
Hinting of happier revelations yet,
When those they loved were perfected in faith.
These smiles at first were answered but with smiles,
Incredulous, rebuking. See, said they,
In impious invocation of that doom,
How the night lengthens we have brought with us;—
Permitted to this end, that out of night
And preternatural darkness such as this,
May spring that luminous vision we enjoy,
And in ourselves create of things divine.
Partake ye with us. Thus they tempted on.
Wonder at last awoke desire. Among
The original seed angelic, was a sage
Of dominant lineage—for undated years
Prime counsellor of good—who oft had urged
Obedience, and reproof on all who erred
In listening to the promissory guests,

One wasted atom, even, of an hour—
And most deplored their advent. Him it seemed
Good to the Great One—who controls all life,
And circumscribes all action, so to prove
His further ends superior—to permit
One moment's fragile converse with the spirit
Chief of those voluntary visitants,
Who lay reclined on fragrant flowers, as though
Dreaming, yet only half dissolved in sleep ;—
The radiant chaplet drooping, and the zone
Cœrulean, featly tricked with semblant stars,
Unloosened for repose. Arise, he cried,
Steruly. And wherefore ? said the angel guest ;
In wise and happy idlesse, half divine,
Those live who how to spend their life know best ;
Our rest is contemplation ; worship our
Sole work. The weak alone unceasingly
Devote themselves to action ; but for us,
We mightiest are in rest. This eve return—
And I will shew thee that we worship here.
What more, in speech, hath never been divulged ;
But neither was it much. Away he turned—
His heart assaulted by a storm of thought.
The day he passed in musing and in prayer
Repeated, but unsatisfied. At night,
When all the stars burned brightliest, and the bowers
Of song were silent, he in stealth returned—
And lo ! the Spirit slumbering as before.
O ! sweet and soft salute of sacred sleep—
The starry eyes, and lightning lids of earth,
And evening, slowly sealing, and the cheek
Of angel painting with a pearlier calm—
How wert thou mockéd then ! Morn came, and he
Returned not,—poor apostate ! Soul by soul
Who went to seek him stayed ; so strong the spell,
One dread defection cast ; in every bower,
But that wherein he was, 'twas said he hid ;
And soon each flowery canopy one concealed—
The proselyte of idols—slave of self,
Who was to seek, but never to be found.
Pity them, now, ye angels ! for, like you,
Equal—almost—in favour of their Lord,

Were once those lapsed ones. These are heart-wrung tears.

At these words, sympathetic tears swam o'er
For the first time, from each celestial eye,
As trees autumnal shed their leafy tears
In golden showers, shaken by sudden gust;—
Tears not to be forbid. In saddest tone
Resumed the Heavenly Stranger his discourse.
Ne'er to be found, I said. But who can find
A limit to the mercy of our Lord?
In like estate they never may be found—
They never shall be: still, for all is hope,
Hope—the immortal virtue of the saints.
But let the time-glass of their sins run down,
Whose recollection whelms me still with woe.
Not many darkening days had passed away
Before the mighty mysteries stood revealed,
And strangest aphanisms, one by one,
Of those once loved and honoured most, made clear.
Beneath the shade delicious of a wood—
In whose Elysian glades those strangers fixed
At first their dwelling, and therein prepared
Their secret rites and sacred mysteries—
Skirting the gold sands of the sapphire sea,
Were those deceived assembled; so deceived,
The day they weened was longer, brighter, now;
And each the other hailed as happier then
Than in the ages passed. Forth flashed the song
Upwards like earth-born lightning, and the dance—
Of crystalline symmetry—skimmed around the shore,
In vortices of light; the world-queen there
Now mixing with the mirthful throng, now sole,
Seeking in thought repose. Oh! this, they cried,
Is joy—the bliss of liberty. At once
That senseless dream to dissipate, lo! there rushed,
Out of a cave, with toppling crags o'erhung,
A hugeous monster, such as never Night
With murderer's mind engendered, when his heart
Lay panting underneath the conscience pang—
Like fawn beneath a wolf's jaw. Dragonlike
In lengthening volumes stretched his further part,
Incalculably curled; but in the front,

On one wide neck a hundred heads he reared,
Which spake with every mouth a hundred tongues,
Through teeth of serried daggers black with blood
The breath he drew in day he breathed out night.
And he descended to the sea to drink,
Though close by his cave a cool bright river ran;
For it was thirst the monster better loved
Than aught that thirst could quench. The abhorrent sea
Shrank backwards, tide by tide; but he pursued,
Triumphing in its fascinating fear,
Into the very midst; then gorged, returned,
Soul-sodden to the shore, where prone he lay
Before his horrid hold; with stormy joy
Gnashing his steely teeth, and with his tail,
Now close contorted, and now far out launched,
Sweeping the shiny slime of the wide sea sands.
Awe-stricken stood the dupéd allies, fear-grouped,
Of the delusive strangers. Ceased at once
The choir-maze astroecidal; shouts of joy
And gratulation, all ceased. First to speak
Was one, the last who lapsed from pure estate.
Be this the god ye serve?—The god ye swear
That we should this day see?—Our god, said they.
And are we bound to adore him who have passed
Through your mysterious rules and on us ta'en
His worship by the oath of fire? Ye are;
In tones of hate replied the spirit chief,
By whom that wise one told of, late, was lost—
There standing as the hierophant of hell;—
Behold, ye are before him—bow the knee.
And the vast monster smiled; on every face,
A hot and lurid smile—like the red light
Which hovereth o'er the earthquake yet unborn,
Though quick. Oh woe! When all—such answer made
As heretofore recorded—with remorse
Were smitten and repentance, and aside
Turned them to go; the hierophant exclaimed,
Give to the mighty one his victim due!
Then those destroyers seized the angel youth
Who first recanted his accurséd oath,
And cast him at the monster's feet, which cried,
No more of these ignoble victims; hence!

Bring me the royal bride, and I depart.
Soon as these fearful words were heard, lament
And consternation seized the greater half
Of those there present—and most base resolve
Filled up like molten lead the others' hearts.
Which cruel purpose when the sister-queen
Saw—to that living idol, fierce and foul,
She kneeled, and, touched with natural sorrow, him
Besought the child to spare. Take what, she said,
Take all thou wilt, but leave alone this one—
My sweet and sacred sister. She with me
Once in the happy passed, and innocent, lived
A pure perpetual blessing; from her hand
Came boundless bounties; not a word she spake,
But seemed a benediction: her bright heart
With lovelight glowed, for ever at the full.
In days of old o'er all the orb she ranged,
And reigned where'er she ranged. All things rejoiced
In her ecstatic advent. By her touch
The thrall a thronéd prince became; the dead
Dawned into life; o'er all things spread the spell
Of her resplendent presence. That they touched
Her very footsteps gladdened, as the waves
Leap into light and vanish in a smile.
But now—because of deeds thou know'st too well,
Deeds, peradventure, for repentance meet—
Immured, she lives the life of charity
In the still precincts of her holy home,
With many a lovely handmaiden around
In starry palace templed, till the hour
Of our celestial nuptials, as she deems,
If sorrow have not wronged her reason—come.
I, her rebukes of love have ofttimes borne
And scorned, and heaped upon her infamies,
Which she hath thrice forgiven; but let her not
Be out of life abolished, who hath done
Such good, and been so harmless at the worst.
Thou speakest as the she-fool only can—
Retorted then the angry terror! rise!
The very reasons thou dost name for life
Are those wherefore I hate her unto death.
Go! thou thyself shalt bind her to yon rock

Or I will slay ye both. His tongue then ceased
Its frightful thunder-clang, nor spake he more.
Meanwhile, those basest few who thought to win
The tyrant monster's favour and preserve
Themselves from fatal end—death-threatened now,
Sought out the sorrowing maiden, and disguised
In borrowed robes of cheerful thanksgiving,
Entered the heavenly sanctuary, wherein
At the high altar ministering she stood,
Presaging sorrows soon to be fulfilled ;
Predicting woes accomplished while foretold.
These, in mock worship mingling with the rest,
Yea even in mine own presence—for in her,
'Midst all these woes, did I sole solace find—
Her, sudden, seized, and bound, and hurried off
To a lone sea-crag, circled by the sea,
And, for the monster's evening victim, left.
Then vowed I to deliver her from her foes—
And for the rescue armed. The lightning steed,
Which pastures on the air, and is the sign
Of the divine destruction of all worlds,—
The sparkles of whose hoofs, in falling stars,
Struck from the adamantine course of space,
Stream o'er the skies,—in swift and solemn joy,
Came trembling at my call. A lance of light,
A sunbeam tempered in eternal fire,
I in mine hand assumed, and forth we fared.
Wide o'er the waters rose a wail of woe,
With a fierce shout of exultation twined ;
For chained to a dark rock, rough and high, the sea
Was loathly yielding back to land,—there stood—
Arrayed in Paradisal purity
Alone, that meek and innocent angel-maid ;—
The monster wading greedily through the waves,
Her to devour ;—the angels, some aghast,
Exulting some ; her sister, as half-dead,
Fell fainting from her seat ; the light alone
Of falling stars, with blinks of lightning mixed,
Lamping the red horizon fitfully.
Midway between the rock and sea we met,
And though the creature bellowing would have fled,
And have defiled the eye of light no more,

Yet was I there to slay as well as save.
The lance of light I couched : and straight my steed,
Who knew, instinctive, all his dread devoir,
Drove on like an inevitable storm ;—
The weight behind propelled the point before
Through the whole monstrous mass, till in the heart,
Quivering it stood, triumphant. Down then dropped
The soulless corse. The beauteous captive's bonds
I, instant, burst, and wrapped her sacred limbs
In the same robes I wore—of golden web
And azure wove ; for forth I sped at first,
Of conquest confident, mine armour dight
With trophies rich, beseeeming such event ;—
And on the rock where long she swooning lay,
Though conscious she was saved from direst death,
I laid her perfect in pure loveliness,
And in that garb of glory. Then there came
A voice, as of a star-cloud in the sky,
Approving, and all blessing I had done ;
Formed, too, beneath the cloud, a rainbow bright ;
From whose arch, falling as in circular wind,
And in diminishing spires, this bird of light,
The sign and augury of peace divine,
God-missioned, hovered round me for a time,
Then nestled in my bosom—as ye see.
But not so from the orb, where still remained
Those recreant spirits who, with loud lament,
Wept their extinguished god ; him to revive
Striving with all their strength. In vain they strove.
Now, lest the venomous vapours of his corpse
Should the whole sphere impest, it was decreed
By crown alike and lieges, all alarmed,
To offer to the soul of the dead beast
His body as a solemn holocaust ;—
Nought else like worthy of such sacrifice.
With a vast mass of pompous rites. the Queen,
In sordid robes of false humility,
And all her proudest subjects, head declined,—
In mournful train, upon a mighty mound
Upreared by the seaside, the heapy corpse
Of the terrific slain laid out ;—and balked
In their last complot, lo ! another seized

Their souls—instinct with hate more murderous still—
Mine own destruction. Me, where I remained,
Protecting her I honoured, they approached,
Beseeching I would witness the last rites
And public incremation of the dead,
In proof that I with them were reconciled,
Ere they for aye departed. This I did—
Knowing full well their most recondite sins
And secretest intentions; they the while
Unknowing wholly mine. No sooner came
I to the seat, in right opposal placed,
To that despotic empress, than they urged
Me to revivify the hateful frame—
The incarnation of that fleshly hell,
I had, for her sake whom I loved, destroyed;—
But once for all their quest refused; whereat,
The throned one brake her sceptre in her wrath,
And cried,—Have done with him!—I own him not,
And have forsworn him. Let him die his death.
Thereto I answered not—within myself
Secretly praying but that God would make
The spirit fair concordant with the form,
And what was beauteous, lovely. They forthwith—
Tempter and tempted hating me alike—
Rushed on and bound me fast; no sooner bound,—
Than from the Heavenly Father of us all,
All power I felt transfused into mine hands:
Yet let them work her will, that all might be
Accomplished in their nature, and the great
Designs of God fulfilled which He sole knew.
Three days and nights, or rather one long night,
But by diverse degrees of darkness marked,
Again it died, in foul offensive fumes
Exhaled away; so vast that carcass grim!
Around whose molten mass, too, the whole time,
Were fierce and bloody combats, tribe 'gainst tribe,
In honour of the dead one, till at last,
Me on that burning and abhorréd bier—
That carnal-hell impersonate, all fire,
Remorseless cast they; and their sin-palled eyes
Perceived not that a Heaven-sent cloudlet caught
Safe in its soft cool bosom; there create

By love divine of God, that mercy might
The dear decrees of judgment execute,
And scathless free the Being bound and doomed.
High upwards rose, then, in Heaven's darkening face,
Wide wavering from innumerable tongues,
Like to the desert sand-cloud or simoom,
The columned execrations of the crowd ;
But far below me swept ; they neared not e'en
The prospect of my feet. Such malice grieved—
How grievous to the soul of love, all sin !
Yet need more made they should be won to God.
Thus praying, I to the rock returned, where lay
Entranced that lovely maiden of the main,
And stirless, still. Her straight I raised and bore,
Gently and lovingly, within these arms,
To a lone star as yet unblessed with life,
Which round a larger and exterior orb,
The central mirror of the world, wherein
Are shadowed all things passed and yet to come—
Rolls restless in the Heavens, that so she might,
Awakening, see new cause to bless her lord.
There, all enchanting, she enchanted lay ;
Beheld of all, beloved of her kind ;
I, guarding. Meanwhile, in that wretched orb
Prevailed continuous night, and all things died
That drew their life from light ; the flowers their life
Breathed out in incense, and the trees laid down
Their leafy crowns, forlorn ; the herbal earth
In withered, barren, senseless nakedness,
Lay like a clayey corpse. How changed from that bright
orb
The rolling skies had erst rejoiced to see ;
Whereto the orient sun was wont to send,
As to some eaglet orb that loved the light,
His earliest beam to wake his welcomer—
Signal to all of worship ! Now, alas !
Cloaked in impenetrable night, it glode
A black abomination through the skies ;
A reptile world, abhorred of all and shunned.
Then fire was used for light, and each one bare
With him a pitchy torch which reeked of hell ;
Supplied by those deceptive guests who now—

Their doubtful shapes resumed—incited strife,
Commutual hatred, war; and ground to dust
The victims of their mystic mockeries,
With wrongs elaborate and self-torturing sins.
She who, so prompt to rule alone, had deemed
Herself a Queen for aye they laughed to scorn,
Deposed and dungeoned, chained as mad—and slain—
But that their hate preserved her. There she lay,
In wretchedness repentant, wrecked in soul;
Scarce floating on the ages. How she longed
Then, for her sister's voice—and hoped 'gainst hope
For other accent than her own lone lips
Re-echoed from the walls that confined her;—
For one embrace once prized beyond all price!
But such desires as yet might naught avail.
Be sure the Great Perfector hath well earned
All that He gladdeneth over, as His own,
Throughout the threefold world; though Him it wrought
Measureless dole, for the Divine is born
Ever of bitterness; and well I ween,
Where sacrifice is not is never fire.
There lay the stricken despot humbled down
Into a penitent angel, sad and meek.
Bright city, hallowed temple down were razed—
Nay, e'en their deep foundations rooted up;
The sacred groves were fired, and tree by tree,
Charred into naked blackness; all the soil
Was grisly ashes only. Day and night
The skies rang with the cries of myriads' woe,
Till the stars shuddered, and the orb was shook
Wherein I watched the awakening of the maid.
Close by her feet, insculptured, on the couch
Whereon she lay, was seen a child; who held
An hour-glass in his hand. Ten times it turned,
Upwards and downwards; at the twelfth it fell,
And falling broke; and as it fell she rose;
Rose, like a lily bending o'er its stem,
Gently until she stood. And hark, she cried,
Belovéd! hearest thou not that wail of woe?
I know it, whence it comes. Oh let us hence
Hasten, and Heaven beseech to save, to save!
Then stirred the dove divine imbosomed here;

And I obeyed its impulse, as of God,
From whom it came ; and calling to my side
A cloudlet—like a silver swan that sailed
The deeps of air—we clasped its snowy down,
And swiftly winged our way ;—till drawing nigh
Again, that dark apostate orb, the tears
Of my beloved one fell like raindrops down.
Thus moved, I said, unto the air, be fire ;
And to the waters, be ye flames ; and straight
It was so ; for it seemed but meet to purge
The sanctuary in this wise, so defiled.
From side to side, from end to end, it burned ;
From pole to pole it blazed—from sea to sea ;
Till, in the central city of that sphere,
Now shining ruins only, from the height
Of one immoveable mountain monument,
Forked like a double pyramid, which sole
Survived the splendid wreck, was spied, far off
On the horizon, the unbroken ring
Of round beleaguering fire, which, swift as thought,
'The nations all into one death-doomed flock,
Relentless, hunted. Midst this fiery woe,
Struck suddenly, as out of vertical space,
Once more the blazing swordstar shewed in Heaven ;
Which many, fearful, deemed, if brandished then
By the same hand as first, would cleave in twain
Their self-accurséd sphere, and hurl its dust,
With them, for aye, into the deadly void.
Near and more near on waves of light it rode,
Swiftly triumphing, and with blinding beam,
Till full above the centre of the orb—
The conflagration of the sphere self-quelled,
As though in presence of a mightier power—
Slowly descending, it alit at last,
And upright stood ;—no more a flaming sword,
But sunbright cross ; 'neath whose redemptive light,
And restorative radiance, all the seeds
Of life leapt upwards in the face of Heaven.
There now it stands, and all who will may live,
Seeking its light. Alas for creature will !
The darkness and the light still stand opposed,
Ceaseless as is the war 'tween good and ill,

Which win and lose eternally in turn ;
While these vivific globules, stars y'cleped,
Roll through the veins galactic of the Heavens ;—
So long as lasts Creation. Go, I said, thou pure
And selfless spirit ! Take thou this golden key,—
Which saying, I from out my bosom took
The true and triple key of all the worlds,
Which nought may let ; which opes whatever can
Be shut, and shuts whate'er be oped ; which turns
The wards of Heaven's own gates of solid light,
The portals of the palace of the Sun—
No eye create shall else behold ;—and placed
In her pure palm. This take and ope, I said,
The prison wherein she, groaning—dying—lies.
Restore her to the vital light. Strike off
The manacles from her hands ; and from her feet
Loosen the gory fetters ; in her wounds
Pour thou the oil of peace, and wash with streams
Of living waters. Clothe her with thyself
As thou art clothed. O cheer her heart with hope
And inspiration of thy faith, and say
I sent thee to redeem her. Tell her, still,
My love hath never altered ; not in grief,
In passion not, not in disgrace, nor guilt ;
Howe'er inconstant her heart, or opposed,
Her love I with an everlasting love ;—
The one am I unchanging ;—what beside
Thou wilt, for thou canst only utter truth.
Go ! and may He who over-orders all,
Speed thee upon thy quest. She, wordless, went,
But looked her thanks—which seemed to promise full
Accomplishment of precept—on a wind
Wafting herself away. I, who, while all
That dark defection reigned, had warned in vain—
Now having seen in recompense most dear
Heaven's own eternal standard planted there,
As in all orbs, triumphant ; and once more
By this dear monitor, this God-gift moved,
That sphere to quit ;—first in myself resolved
The mighty stream of Time to pass, which bounds
And separates the realms of sense and soul
From Heaven's eternal spirit-land, that I

Might to the sire of all which live present
For all the supplications of my heart ;—
And that the prayerful love of that bright maid,
For her belovéd sister, might receive
The seal of God's acceptance. On this high
And arduousest emprise behold me bound ;—
Yet, ere I left my cloudlet car, whence late
I marked that world-wreck, once again I gazed
Thitherward, and beheld before the gates
Of a half-buried palace—black as death
Its marble portals—locked in blessed embrace,
The well-belovéd twain. A voice then spake—
The voice of one joy-hearted, soft and clear
As bells at early morn, on that blessed day,
Named in the breast-laws of each starry orb,
Wherein Eternity entwines with Time
Its golden strands, and weds the world to Heaven ;
Arise ! come forth, belovéd sister, rise.
How blessed am I to serve thee, to release !
Nor doubt, nor wait. Behold thy handmaid, me.
Gifts bring I for thee, gifts of countless price—
Of priceless worth. Thy lover Lord commands
Array thee for the bridals. Lo ! the new
And shining robes, by heavenly fingers wrought,—
Fit for the form divine of her whose love
Is hallowed in the eternal rites of Heaven.
So shall we dwell together here in bliss,
Till He shall come who ever comes to all
His promise sanctifies. Improve the hour
Which yet remains, in all obedience clear ;
And deck thyself in weeds of righteousness,
With jewels of good deeds adorned, and clad
In golden garments redolent of praise.
For infinite is every gift of His
Divine bestowing ; and Salvation's cup,
And Nature's, He to overflowing fills.
With joy I heard—I saw. Nor longer then
Awaited, but where most the starlands crowd
The potent north, soared upwards, space by space,
And firmament by firmament of stars,
Leaving in turn behind ; passing unharmed
Upon the verge of Being, where the path

Narrows to almost nothing, the monsters foul
Earth-dust and Death-night—things ye know not of—
Yet fatal beasts to all who, me before,
That way had urged. But God hath favoured me.
And nigh thereto, the Golgotha of worlds—
The charnel-house of Time, where skull-like orbs,
Extinct of life, with rotten, sickly light,
Defiled the purview, and advance delayed ;
Yet shrinking nought, though shuddering, passed I on,
Through all uncleanness, clean, all foulness, pure.
Hungred, athirst and faint with fasting, still,
My purposed way I held, till bright afar,
The kindly radiance of this angel world
Beaconed me hither—and I came. Ye now,
Thanks for your holy hospitality,
Behold me journeying to the city of God,
There to prefer my prayers, and plead for those
Whom still I love, though drawn aside to trust
The natural strength allotted them, and not—
With sole reliance—God ; who thus to all
By failure e'en of angels, when He wills,
Asserts in all His high supremacy.
Let whoso feels in holy will inspired,
Me to accompany, speak—to that bright throne
Where God our Father in all glory sits,
The world in holy audience at His feet ;—
And there, with me, while giving praise for all,
His word hath made and saved, for those not yet
Redeemed, pray ceaselessly. Uprising then
As 'twere a constellation, suddenly,
Seven of those gracious angels pressed around,
Eager for friendly escort ; when the chief
Cherub who welcomed first that pilgrim bright,
Thus said :—Another holy day, made blest
By our dear guest—how different he from those
Deceptive friends he tells of!—hath now slid
Into the passive strength-restoring night ;
Rest also ye. Such is mine own intent,
Replied the eloquent guest ; and less for that,
These life-tried limbs have gone through, than their sakes,
Who know not half the flight they meditate.
Then, worship before rest ; as was the wont

In every alternation of the day,
Ere action, or refreshment, or repose.
Last, on their happy couches, odorous all
Of flowery incense, lay the angels down;
Shading their faces with the plummy gold
Of their space-searching pinions; sacred sleep
Stealing the starry wonders of their eyes,
And with divinest visions hallowing all.
Morn, like a maiden glancing o'er her pearls,
Streamed o'er the manna-dew, as though the ground
Were sown with starseed;—and the angels rose,
Each from his hallowed couch, and—duly made
The sole oblation of the heart to God—
Stood ready for departure; taking leave,
For a brief space, of their beloved compeers;
With many an ardent longing for the way,
As yet untried—'neath such sweet leadership.
At length the last embrace, last look, exchanged,
High upward the bright bevy, like to light
Out of the crownéd north,—shot; on and on,
Through firmamental fields of farthest space,
Till at the brink of a vast river they
Arriving, halted, which pervaded Heaven;
Swift as a cataract, yet unbroken, still
And level as the mean line of the sea.
Thick with chaotic matter and unformed—
Like the volcanic blood which bounds, unseen,
In veins of lightning, through earth's cavernous heart—
Mid ruined orbs, like broken ice-lumps, rolled,
Melting and crumbling, to the ocean deeps
Of vast eternity; it gushed along.
Its depths were darkness' self; but every wave,
Which curled out of the mass, seemed light alive,
Though but an instant. On an eminent height,
Which overpeered the stream, the angels sate.
Then said the angel leader to the rest;
What see ye past the river? And they said,
We nothing see beyond. Athwart this stream,
If stream it be—and not a shoreless main—
Is more than we can ken. But I, returned
The questioner, see beyond the clear bright land
Of Heavenly immortality; mine own

By birthright and by gift ; and thither, we.
Descending to the shore, he stooped, and dipped
Into the stream his hand ; which filling full,
He tasted and thus spake. Ye waters—once
Of death—but now of life eternal, take
Back the libation I have made of ye ;
And be ye changed for ever. Uttering this,
He cast the dark remainder in the flood,
That instant changed into a flood of life,
Flashing with light celestial to its depths
Of bottomless infinitude ; and straight,
Grasping the bright branch of an olive tree,
Which bowered with verdant gold the peaceful shore,
He therewith sprinkled, one by one, the band
Who him accompanied ; with these pure rites
Making them free, initiate into Heaven,
And death the lesser mysteries of life.
The solemn marvel of these gladsome deeds,
Each heart lit up with self-evolving joy.
And round him all stood linked in one embrace.
Behold, he said ; for fit it is that now
We keep our course ; and close below there lay,
Moored but a little distance from the side,
A crescent-boat, translucent as a star,
Wherein we all embarked, in godly dread :
For one among that chosen seven was I.
If lightning were the gross corporeal frame
Of some angelic essence, whose bright thoughts
As far surpassed, in keen rapidity,
The lagging action of his limbs as doth
Man's mind his clay ; with like excess of speed
To animated thought of lightning, flew
That moon-horned vessel o'er life's deeps divine ;—
Far past the golden isles of memory,
Where only names exist and things are not ;
Mingled wherewith a cloudy counterpart
Mocks every islet, and therein are lost
Those upon whom the bright seductive sea
Smiles, wreckful ; and sincerest smoothness feigns.
We went, we knew not how. It was as though
The finite, mingling with the infinite,
Produced an utter ravishment and sense

Of o'er abundant reason. At the last
Heaven's azure shores we made, and leaped on land.
Scarce had we touched that land of life, when lo !
From every footfall, like soft waves of light,
A murmuring music sprang, as if its own
It welcomed to its bosom, with soft joy
Rejoicing inwardly. The sacred soil,
To this premortal music vibrating,
The same which Faith hears in the still of Time—
Their chief saluted ; kneeling, likewise, we.
Then He embraced us all and each in turn.
Here let us build, said he, a tower of light ;
That all upon the further side may know
We have in safety crossed the flood. Himself
Placed the foundation-stone, and one by one,
Masses of dazzling adamant which starred
The shining shore, like flowers that fringe the banks
Of woodland brook, we piled up altarwise
At his command. On every stone engraved,
In gleamy darkness, was the name of God ;
For every star a stone ; and every name
A separate title symbolising love.
A sheaf of lightning on the head he placed,
Which with the skies innate communion held,
And burned in correspondence. Thus was all
With the pure blessing of perfection crowned.
Our journey called us on ; and pleased we trode
That land of solid concord ; yet not long
The lower line of progress kept. Aloft
Once more we stretched the light-related wing,
High in the face of Heaven's eternal towers,
Which still immeasurably distant shewed,
Of soul-enkindling brilliance, and a power,
Light-uttering splendour, that at first appeared
Enough to quench our lesser beam. But this
As we approached them strengthened, and enlarged,
In heart and effluence. Whilst we happy seven
Were marvelling at such change, inwrapped in thought,
Lost in the labyrinth of boundless love,
Self-humbled by the glory on us poured,
We found that Heaven was close to us ; and we
The shining basement of the walls had reached

Of the celestial city, which did itself
Enclose, or seemed, the essential universe ;—
And standing by the glowing gate of prayer,
About to enter, missed our stranger friend.
In holy wonder lost, still greater now,
Each to the other turned, yet nothing spake,
For silence sealed each tongue. But straight on high
A voice spake for us, saying—Enter ye,
For I am He who led ye hither ; I
Who lead ye still, the Son. 'Then rushed on all,
Like eagle swallowing up its streamy way,
The whole mysterious truth. And we obeyed
The word magnetic, the divine constraint.
We entered. All was silent. One sole voice,
Through the serene eternity of Heaven,
Streamed upwards towards the Ineffable ;—nor harp,
Nor hymn, nor breath beside ; nor thought, nor hope
Of all Creation, but therein was bound.
Father, He said, I pray for all the worlds,
Whom Thou by these creating hands hast made,
And linked with mine. Though fallen they be by sin,
Through trusting in themselves and not in Thee,
Let not imperfect nature, tried by Thy
Perfection, their eternal ruin prove.
Rather let me that glory I partake
With Thee, to them dispense, that Heaven's pure light
The darkness of the world may clarify,
And Time, impregnated by Thy pure Spirit, bring forth
Divine eternity ; death's bitter flood
O'erpassed, the pure regeneration come
To all life, saved and sanctified to Thee.
He ceased ; and issuant from the eternal throne,
Came like a cloud of light, the bright response,
The Godhead in expression, uttering love
In laws more broad than light, which thus were known.
Son ! for Thy sake I make the world mine own ;
For Thy sake hallowed, and in Thee redeemed,
The universal life exempt from sin.
That love which founded first the skiey stars
Shall see no bound, and so be satisfied
With sempiternal ingrowth. World on world,
The illuminated missal of the skies,

Thou turnest, leaf by leaf in turn shall close.
Thy spirit only, which Thyself hast poured
Into the worlds of life, shall live for aye,
And in this presence, as the angel man,
Acknowledging his Lord and Thee his love.
In everlasting union all shall dwell
With Thee, who giving up the joys of Heaven,
And union with the One, for life discerpt,
And spheres of shining sadness, madest Thyself,
Sinless, a perfect sacrifice for sin.
Therefore in Thee shall sin and death be sanctified
And flesh made spirit, human nature made
Divinity, vice virtue, and earth Heaven.
As in creating light, is night destroyed,
So every bodily organ shall be changed
Into a spirit-sense ; and human power
Into divinest faculty ; each fault
Into a pure possession and stronghold.
Behold ! the worlds Thou prayedst for, all are Thine ;
And that in chief I gave Thee, recreant once—
To bliss restored and glorified in grace,
Made happier and diviner far than first,
The earnest of the harvest of the skies ;—
Behold it at Thy feet : the creature lures
Of mystery and idolatry, become
Pure faith and simple worship ; the blazing sword,
Whose firebirth of incendiary sins
Wrapped at the last in pitchy flames, the orb
Of stainless beauty, so created—now
Transformed, the fateful mysteries of the cross
Foreshadows and confirms. Lo there it stands ;
And all Thou prayedst for, perfected ere prayed.
God said : responsive silence caught the words
And hid them in her heart, as night the stars.
Glowing and sparkling in the life-rayed sun
Of the celestial firmament, glided up
On pinions wide of playful lightnings poised,
That sphere Elysian, consummate in bliss.
And all the angels thereto bent their gaze
As stars in nightly council watch the earth.
Then looked and saw, three paces from the light,
’Midst of that pure and renovated orb,

Beside the gardened bank of a bright stream,
A fair and lofty lady, clad in robes
Of seagreen hue, engirdled with a zone
All variously tinct, and round her brow,
Encrowned with peaks of quivering fire, a veil
Of heavenly azure. In one hand she held
A tower, and in the other hand a tree.
Sat at her feet a melancholy maid,
Pale, perfect and serene, between whom passed
A mutual smile of sympathy and trust,
As though their lot were linked; yet knew they not
How, nor the invisible presence of the Heavens.
These, as they both intently eyed, at last
One to the other spake. Sweet sister mine,
Sleep thou, and let me wait his coming sole.
Me He expects to watch, but would not thou.
Thereon, that lovely lady laid her down
Below a rock, whereby in woods embowered,
And scented with all flowers, the river flowed,—
Her last words, watch; in sooth, He will not come;
Or not to me, who wrought him so great bale.
And the sun set; still watched the maiden meek,
And at midnight she prayed. My Lord, My God!
Thine is the spirit which commands and smiles;
The soul which serves and suffers;—thine the stars,
Tabled upon Thy bosom like the stones
Oracular of light, on the priest's breast;
Thine the minutest mote the moonbeams shew.
Let but Thy words come true, and all are blessed;
Be but Thine infinite intents fulfilled,—
And what shall foil the covenanted oath
Whereon the mounded earth is based?—and lo!
The whole at last redeemed and glorified.
While thus she prayed, Heaven looking on, came down
From His eternal heights the Angel-God,
Upon whose breast the sun blazed; and he stood
Between them; and the lady rose all pale;
But the mild maiden gladdened in her heart.
The Angel took the maiden by the hand,
And said, O thou who watchedst and hadst faith,
What shall be thy reward? If I, she said,
Have done well, 'twas from reverence of Thee

And love of Thy Divine love; she, alas!
Being infinitely worthier of Thy heart,
Predestined from the first to Thy bright breast,
Than I the thousand virtues to proclaim,
Which own Thee Lord for ever. What though sin,
Serpent-like, fanged her, and she fell, I knew
That Thou by touch couldst heal her, and Thy power
To do good equalled by Thy will to do,
Whose love is world-wide. Were there due to me
Of guerdon aught, it should be still to serve
And dwell with both for aye. Be, then, to her
The vow performed first promised, and let my
Betrothal, Lord! in her espousals end.
Then whelmed with gratitude, that royal dame,
In all her bridal beauty cast her down,
And clasped her handmaid's knees and wept aloud.
But her the Angel raised and dried her tears,
With His serenest smiles, and blessed them both.
Come ye with me, He said, beloved come!
The handmaid's faith hath saved the mistress' throne.
Be one my sister, and be one, my bride;
Each than the other dearer, more divine.
The world's wide doomring is the land I rule,
My home is Heaven, and mine inheritance
Both shall enjoy, predestinate of God.
The Father to the Son gives all in Time,
The Son restores all in Eternity
Unto His Sire; and I myself to Him.
Then one by either hand, He led them up;
This, with the holy presence and august,
Most like the mother goddess, city crowned,
Now tiar'd as with the towers of Paradise;
That, with the lucid crescent on her brow,
To the high seats of old prepared for both.
And all the angels and the spirits blessed,
They who had erred and they who taught to err—
Along with those, who wise and pure withstood
Temptation, yet now wisest, humblest were—
Dwelt in that sphere, concentric with the Sun,
Which ruled the skies supernal; and they passed
Upward and downward as best listed them.
And Wisdom passed amidst them, like a thought

Among a gladsome circle. And the face
 Of all the orbs was changed. Then too was seen
 The great unveiling of all mysteries,
 Creation glorified: in childlike calm,
 Lapped in the mantle of eternal rest.
 The jubilant song swelled circling through the courts
 Of everlasting joy, like a round wave,
 Till it suffused all life, and touched the stars
 On the unlimited eye-line of pure space.
 Smiled the Eternal Son, who can alone
 Behold the Invisible, and Heaven then saw,
 Reflected in the face of Him Divine,
 Born of the Light as eye-glance of the Eye,
 The unseen likeness of the Ineffable One;
 Each like the other as the sky and sea,
 Imbosoming the imaged Infinite.
 The Son Eternal smiled! and from His throne
 Stretched out the hand of blessing o'er the world:
 And blessed it was—for ever—blessed it is.

Luniel. The ways of Heaven are always cyclical;
 All orbital its æras, its events.
 Thus though the sin Promethean never cease,
 Nor the avenging vulture's beak, blood-wet,
 Yet is the arrow always on the wing
 Which seeks the heart of vengeance, seeks and slays.
 So from the first Divine forgiveness clasps,
 To her all quickening bosom, all which live;
 Calls all by name, and halloweth them thereby.

Saints. Thus, by God's goodness, goodness comes to us
 Out of His boundless plenitude; and man,
 The shadowy semblance of the vast Divine,
 Like a dark sphere absorbed into the sun,
 As in presecular time emergent thence,
 His constellated seat assumes in Heaven,
 A deathless incarnation of the Light.
 And this despite of evil, sin, and pain,
 That every faculty be perfected,
 And all affection purified in man;
 Love being love of good, hate, hate of ill;
 Divinest hate, unanimous with love.
 Wherefore to those who realize God's will,
 And with the same their own assimilate,

Water in water flowing, air in air,
 Passive as silence, active as the light,
 Receiving and dispensing, moments fall
 Like silver raindrops stippled in the ground,
 Whose resurrection is in grain of gold.
 But with the generation of the world,
 Not thus, who turn their backs upon the sun
 To toy with their own shadows, greatly glad
 Their growth to mark, unthinking that the more
 These things extend themselves, the nearer they
 To their extinction. So the night comes on ;
 And lo ! the whole flock in the fold of death.

Angel of Earth. Ends and beginnings mingle at the
 last ;

All ultimates are foreordained ; these days,
 And those far times, when yon fair flowering orb,
 Lily-like, beamed out of Time's shadowy tide ;
 And spread its bright and continental leaves,
 Fragrant with sunny incense, to the Heavens.
 But His infallible eye, beneath whose beam
 Essence becomes appearance, every day
 Doomsday, an inner circlet of pure time,
 Concentric with eternity, and part
 Of the same all inclusive octave here,
 The darkness from the light shall sejugate ;
 The visible veil of the invisible.
 And the times near when all shall be complete ;
 The golden seed from ripe fulfilment fall ;
 Eternal mind immortal utterance make ;
 The many-coloured arch a circle be ;
 Earth's orb elect her crescent horns conjoin
 With light perpetual, total, vital light ;
 And, the mixed past made pure and holy, cause
 The present Paradise, the future Heaven.

Saints. Man's being is an everlasting birth ;
 We are ourselves the elements of Heaven.
 And as the eye is sacred to the sun,
 So be the soul to God. It is sweet to point
 To prophesies fulfilled, when spells of good.
 To us extinct all ill, all sin, all woe ;
 The world seems wreathed from end to end with joy,
 And garlanded with glory, as the hall

Of some great populous palace at a feast.
 Our nature we relume, too, as the sun,
 From the bright burning atmosphere he breathes,
 The starry spirits of his frame renews,
 •And revels in his glory without end.
 So we in that Divinity rejoice,
 Wherein all things authentic do causate.

SCENE—*The Millennial Earth.*

SAINTS and ANGELS *worshipping* ; FESTUS.

Saints. To Thee God, Maker, Ruler, Saviour, Judge !
 The Infinite, the Universal One,
 Whose righteousnesses are as numberless
 As creature sins ; who Giver art of life ;
 Who sawest from the first that all was good,
 Which Thou didst make ; and seal'dst it with Thy love,
 Thy boundless benediction on the world ;
 To Thee be honour, glory, prayer, and praise,
 And full-orbed worship from all worlds, all Heavens.
 May every being bless Thee in return
 As Thou dost bless it ; every age and orb
 Utter to Thee the praise Thou dost inspire.
 Let man, Lord ! praise Thee most, as all redeemed,
 As many in the saints, as one in Thee.
 Oh may perpetual pleasure, peace, and joy,
 And spiritual light inform all souls ;
 And grace and mercy in bliss thousand-fold
 Enwrap the world of life. May all who dwell
 On open earth, or in the hid abyss,
 Howe'er they sin or suffer, in the end,
 Receive, as beings born at first of Thee,
 The mercy that is mightier than all ill.
 May all souls love each other in all worlds,
 And all conditions of existence : even
 As now these lower lives that dwell with man
 In amity, rejoicing in the care
 Of their superior, and in useful peace,
 Upon the common earth, no more distained
 With mutual slaughter—no more doomed to groan
 At sights of woe, and cruelty, and crime.
 Lo ! all things now rejoicing in the life

Thou art to each and givest, live to Thee ;
 And knowing others' nature and their own
 Live in serene delight, content with good,
 Yet earnest for the last and best degree.
 Their hands are full of kindness, and their tongues
 Are full of blessings, and their hearts of good.
 All things are happy here. May kindness, truth,
 Wisdom, and knowledge, liberty, and power,
 Virtue, and holiness, o'erspread all orbs
 As this star now ; the world be bliss and love ;
 And Heaven alone be all things ; till at last
 The music from all souls redeemed shall rise,
 Like a perpetual fountain of pure sound,
 Upspringing, sparkling in the silvery blue ;
 From round creation to Thy feet, O God !

Festus. How calm, how sweet this life ! from passion
 pure,

From natural evils freed. The storm of time
 The world hath wept through, and the whirl of life
 Once mine, shews like an agonizéd dream
 Hung in the halls of memory, bannerwise ;
 Proof-sign of victory passed. Speak, angel-bride,
 Being of bliss and beauty, seems not this
 The peace serene thy spirit longed for once ?

Clara. It is. How doubly dear all sacred things
 Shew to the soul elect salvation here
 Hath hallowed ; and how blessed the high employ,
 God's wisdom teaching to millennial man,
 And learning love divine.

Festus. Doubt's tempest-age
 Soothed into silent and profound belief ;
 The soul's ambitious and ill-ordered quests
 Chastened to aspirations ; all desires,
 Calm as the regular breathings of the breast.
 What joy to worship, in our heart recrowned,
 The exiled sovereign of earth's youth, long lost,
 Our old paternal faith !—What joy to feel,
 Though life-deforming passions come and go,
 Stormlike, and cloudlike, high o'er all, the spirit
 Stands, in impassive purity and peace,
 Identical with Heaven. See, soul of light,
 Thy kindred angel !

Angela. Yes. This joy is mine,
 To quit betimes the grandeurs of the sun,
 His continents of light and sea-like springs
 Of radiance, here to wander by their side
 Beloved on earth as mine; and ye are they
 I loved most. Most of all it gladdeneth me
 In hallowed commune thus to help expand
 The spirit capacious of extremest truth
 With ends beneficent; that godly act
 Keep rank with godly thought.

Festus. God's universe,
 A boundless field for ever-active good,
 To soul so bent, unfolds. While, world by world,—
 Through all successive spheres, the aspiring spirit,
 Death born, yet reascendent, till it come,
 Through many a cradling starlet, to the orb
 Whence its predestined rise shall end all proof,
 Restore the wanderer to the Way, and blend
 Life momentary with the eternal state,
 The everlasting order of all days,—
 Wisdom her many-chambered dome reveals,
 Her graduated Heaven.

Clara. Content with this,
 One altar in her thousand-shrinéd fane,
 Earth's simpler souls their rites of truth and love
 Like faithfully fulfil with those enthroned
 Who look down on the empyrean. Here
 All knowledge sanctified, all mind enlarged,
 All faculties reformed, how perfect seems
 To eyes illumed with truth's interior light,
 Self-opening, flowerlike, those most gracious trials
 Our souls once suffered; sufferings now enjoyed.

Angela. What lengths we reach of spiritual light;
 What breadths now compass of celestial views;
 What heights faith's visionary eye commands;
 What depths we fathom of divinity;
 Let him tell who can count the motes of air,
 Stars, and the rays of stars, or God's good deeds.

Festus. Alas! what mean conceptions once were man's
 Of God; His essence, nature, ends. In vain
 Men thought to magnify the Infinite,
 Who merely magnified their own small thought,
 And made it monstrous. Not in vain for such

May we Thy pity ask, Thy pardon, Lord ;
 For us, the joy to feel, the gift to prove
 Love, power, and wisdom omnicausal Thine,
 Which from the fount divine of Being flow.
 With hatred and revenge are base effects,
 And passions, to mean natures only known ;
 Not to be charged to God, nor named with Him.
 Passions are proofs of imperfection. Thou
 Only hast all perfections, God ! who art
 Eternal reason quickening boundless laws ;
 The laws of love, life, light, wherein be based
 The world's sublime foundations.

Angela. Oh, how vast
 The glories of the future, once mismatched
 'Gainst earth-life merely, and all its littleness.

Clara. Were happiness alone our Being's aim,
 We, over nature reigning and mere soul,
 Pure intellect, and all whom, led by them
 Our better lot is here to raise, refine,
 Enlighten, free from inner mental bonds,
 Oh, glorious rule ! it might indeed seem well
 For good of others and our own delight,
 This natural dispensation and divine,
 This first degree of Heaven should aye endure.

Angela. True ; earth is all one Eden. Pity, sure,
 That it should ever end.

Saint. I say not so ;
 Although I have a thousand plans in hand,
 Some interwoven with the farthest stars—
 Each one of which might ask a year of years
 To perfect.

Clara. True ; our Maker knoweth best
 What thought or deed may best belong to time,
 Or to eternity.

Saint. All prophesy
 Hath said the earth shall cease, and that right soon.
Festus. It is like enough. Beauty's akin to Death.

Angel. Behold, our sister Graces of the skies,
 Faith, Hope, and Love, descend ! Methinks of late
 Ye chiefly dwell on earth.

Love. Where lives and reigns
 The Son of God, there are we ever seen,
 Successive, as the seasons to the sun.

Saints. Well are ye known and welcome in all worlds.
Wherever lofty thought or godly deed
Is lodged or compassed, there your blessings rest.

Hope. How sweet, how sacred now, this earth of man's,
The prelude of a yet sublimer bliss!—
I marked it from the first, while yet it lay
Lightless and stirless; ere the forming fire
Was kindled in its bosom, or the land
Lift its volcanic breast-work up from sea.
The deluge and idolatries of men
I viewed, though shuddering, and with faltering eye,
E'en to the incarnation of Heaven's Lord,
And dawning of His faith; that faith which was
An infant and anon a giant; was
A star, and grew a Heaven-fulfilling sun;
Which was an outcast, and became, ere long,
A dweller in all palaces; which hid
Its head in dens of deserts, and sat throned,
After, in richest temples high as hills:
Which was poured out in mortal blood, and rose
In an immortal spirit; as a slave
Was sold for gold and prostrated to Power;—
And now that lowly bondmaid is a Queen;
And lo! she is beloved in earth and Heaven;
And lieth in the bosom of her Lord,
The Bride of the All-worshipped, one with God.

Love. We, even of divinest origin,
In infinite progression view all worlds;
And we are happy.

Faith. The dead sleep as yet;
But their time cometh, and the bonds of death
Already slacken round the living soul;
The mortal sleep of ages, which began
When Time sank down into his slumberous west,
Thins even now o'er the reviving eyes,
Gathering their Heaven-lent light, no more to wane
In woe or age; never be quenched in tears,
Like a star in the sea. It is as I ever knew;
My life is to receive and to believe
The Word and words of God.

Love. I who am Love,
And Grace, and Charity, rejoice with you,

Whither ye wend I with ye ; whether here,
 Or on the utmost rim of Light's broad reign,
 The least and last of stars which even seems
 To tremble at its insignificance,
 In presence of Infinity ; where yet
 No angel's wing hath waved, nor foot of fiend
 Left its hot imprint ;—still, in all do we
 Find fit delight and honour, as now here.
 Now earth and Heaven hold commune, day and night ;
 There's not a wind but bears upon its wing
 The messages of God ; and not a star
 But knows the bliss of earth.

Festus.

The earth hath God
 Remade, and all its elements refined,
 Fit for sublimer Being. Flesh hath passed
 Its fiery baptism, and come forth clear
 As crystal gold : all that of vile or mean
 Pertained to it hath perished atomless.
 The kindred ties of family and race,
 Intensified into identity, now,
 Unite us with the Maid-born ; He, with God.
 Earth, like a diamond, basks in her own free light
 Unfed, unaided, unrequiring aught.
 All now is purity, and power, and peace.
 The first-born of creation, they who hail
 Archangels as their brethren, mountainlike
 Reign o'er the plains of men, converting all ;
 Reaping the fields of immortality,
 Each one his sheaf, for Him the Harvest-Lord ;
 To whom belongs earth's whole estate and life,
 And every world's.

Angel.

And He shall garner all.
 The awful tribes which have in Hades dwelt,
 Past count of time, await their rising. God's
 Great day, the Sabbath of the world's long week,
 Is at high noon ; and Christ hath yet to come,
 To judge and save the living and the dead.

Saint. The shadows of eternity o'ercast

Already Time's bright towers. The Heavens shall come
 Down like a cloud upon a hill, and sweep
 Their spirit over earth, and the whole face
 And form of things shall be dissolved and changed.

Nothing shall be but essence, perfect, pure,
 And void of every attribute but God's.
 This even is too gross for that which is
 To come. The holy have both earth and Heaven.

Festus. Nor pain, nor toil of mind or frame, nor doubt,
 Nor discontent, nor enmity to God,
 Disturb the steady joy the spirit feels;
 Nor element can torture, nor time tire;
 Nor sea nor mountain make or bar or fear;
 Sickness and woe and death are things gone by;
 Destroyed with the destruction of the world:—
 Shadows of things which have been, never more
 To waste the world's bright hours, nor grate the heart
 Of mighty man; now fit for thrones and wings;
 Ruler of worlds, main minister of Heaven,
 Inheritor of all the prophecies
 Of God, fore-uttered through the tongues of Time,
 Ages of ages. Evil is no more.

Archangel. And does earth satisfy thee now?

Festus.

As earth.

There is a brighter, loftier life for man
 Even yet, the very union with God.

Archangel. God works by means. Between the two
 extremes

Of earth and Heaven there lies a mediate state,—
 A pause between the lightning lapse of life
 And following thunders of eternity;—
 Between eternity and time a lapse,
 To soul unconscious, though agelasting, where
 Spirit is tempered to its final fate;
 Within or between worlds, repose or bliss
 Divested, man shall mix with Deity,
 And the Eternal and Immortal make
 One Being. As in earth's first paradise
 God's spirit walked with man, and commune made
 With him, so in the second, after death,
 Man's spirit walks with God in an elect
 Existence, and a vigil of the great,
 The holy day which is to break in Heaven.
 Thither the Lord of Life went, in the hour
 That hell by earth revenged itself on Heaven,
 With one soul penitent accompanied;—

Nor long remain'd He there, yet long enough
 To cheer earth's faithful, who received Him then
 In silent unknown blessedness of soul,
 With time-outwearing hope that yet in Him
 They should partake the Godhood of His love.
 And with Him rose then, in prophetic proof
 Of his Divinity, many a deathless ghost,
 Triumphant o'er that blind revenge which wrought
 Hell! thy destruction—thy salvation, earth!

Festus. That such will be, the just well know; and all
 Earth's great events and changes tend thereto;
 Its fiery dissolution in the past,
 And supernatural recommencement now
 Under the universal creed of Christ.
 The chosen and the world-redeemed partake
 His personal and spiritual reign.

Archangel. And this shall last, till like the setting sun
 Deserting earth, he shall retire to Heaven,
 With all his captive victors in his train,
 Triumphant, and translated evermore
 Into the hierarchal skies. Wilt see,
 While yet time is, earth's shadowy world within—
 The inward living death she bears about,
 Her heart, hath ever borne—and, augurlike,
 Explore the ominous bowels of the earth?
 As one great life it is pervadeth all
 That bud, breathe, beam, so in the spirit world,
 Of God, His will through countless ministries
 Confided potently, works publicly;
 And I, the liberating Angel, marked
 From supramundane time, act to this end.
 To me are given the secrets of the centre,
 The keys of earth, to lock and to unlock,
 Coffer-like. I it was who seized and bound,
 At His behest who wills and it is done,
 Even on their thrones, the mighty thou wilt see.

Festus. Angel of Heaven! I would view these things.

Archangel. Nor these alone, but other wonders yet.
 The valley where Death's dark wings brooded o'er,
 A God-offending night, unvisited
 By sun or star, where but the fatuous fire
 Of man's weak judgment wandered, till God's Son

Laid o'er the black abyss a bridge of light,
 And married earth to the mainland of Heaven—
 This shalt thou see, Death's grave ; and over him,
 And over it, that monument of light,
 Enlightening earth. The gods and fiends of old,
 And all the fictions of the heart of man,
 Imagined of the future passed for aye,
 Thou shalt inspect. Behold this mountain! We
 Must pass through it ; for under lie the gates
 Of the invisible regions whereunto
 We tend, for a brief season.

Festus. On then !

Archangel. Bare
 Thy marble breast, O mountain, to its depths !
 An angel and a man divine demand
 A way through these foundations.

Festus. And the rocks
 Open like mists before thee.

Archangel. Follow me !

SCENE—*Hades.*

ARCHANGEL, FESTUS, DEATH, LUCIFER.

Festus. Almighty God ! sustain me. This is death ;—
 And this—I knew not, angel ! he was here—
 Is Lucifer—the fallen, like a bolt
 Of thunder forged in intramundane air,
 Self-buried in the centre." Lucifer !
 Wake from thy sealike sleep ; in peace or wrath,
 Rouse from thine age-long trance ; arise and see ;
 The representatives of earth and Heaven
 Stand by thee. As for me, I blame no more
 The part thou tookest in my mortal life ;
 It is gone—nor spurn thee for delusions dead.
 The blood that hath been spilled is sunk in earth,
 And run into the rivers, and dried up
 Into the air ;—and there's an end of it.
 What good hath come of it alone I bear
 At heart. And we have both offended God.
 Let me, though not in nature to forget,
 Forgive, what every one hath sometime felt—

The devil's burning gripe upon his heart.
I see thee with compassion, half with hope.

Lucifer. Mortal! I bow to thee, and would do to
The least and lowest spirit God hath made;
But still the curse that I am curséd with
Outlasts the elements—outlives all time.

Festus. All curses cease with time; all ill, all woe.
Blessings star forth for ever, but a curse
Is like a cloud—it passes.

Lucifer. It was by him—
Yon angel, only not almighty, there!
As with a chain of mountains, I was bound,
And hurled into this unformed nebulous life;
Stripped of all might when mightiest, struck down
While triumphing the loftiest,—enslaved,
When most a monarch o'er both earth and hell,
And made a shadow among shadows here.
It recks not. Let the impenetrable soul
Be ground as through a mill, I only know
In action or inaction equal woe—
Suffering, doing, being, one extreme.
Pass on! we meet again.

Festus. And when we do,
May God forgive, as I!—

Archangel. Behold there, Death!
Throned on his tomb—entombéd in his throne;
Just as he ceased he rests for aye; his scythe,
Still wet out of its bloody swathe, one hand
Tottering sustains: the other strikes the cold
Drops from his bony brow: his mouldy breath
Tainteth all air.

Festus. I dread him now no more,
Nor hate. He is a vanquished enemy.

Archangel. Listen! he speaks.

Death. To you, ye sons of God,
My latest words I utter. Unto Him
Who ever lives, and hath for aye destroyed
Me and my reign, give ye this crown usurped,
And lay it at His feet; and this dulled dart
Which was my sceptre. To the conqueror
Belong these trophies. All the progeny
Of time will soon cease. Lo! the end's at hand.

Archangel. Thus shall it be, O Death ! and thus it is.
 But hear, O Death ! and thou, great Fiend ; the will
 Of the Eternal ruler of all spheres
 Is, that I free ye. Wherefore, rise ! Behold,
 E'en while I speak, so mighty shews His word,
 Those chains though mountain-ribbed, and fit to bind
 The tide to the sea's bed, like clotted snow
 Fall from thy feet. Up, then, and do thy will,
 Whate'er it be, and wheresoever. Go !

Lucifer. Let us away, O Death !

Death.

Let us away !

My realm I leave behind me.

Lucifer.

I mine seek.

Festus. Lo ! they are gone. Earth's breath is purified.
 The air feels lighter. I breathe easier.
 And who are these giantie shades of awe,
 Which fill the midst—the present of the place ?

Archangel. These are the mighty nothings man of old,
 Made ; the dread unrealities by whom
 He swore, to whom he prayed, and at whose shrines
 He sacrificed a thousand times a day :—
 His brother falsehoods these, men like himself,
 Which mere imagination changed to gods ;
 Some for their good deeds, others for their bad :
 Or, angels who aspiring to be gods,
 Made themselves, deathless, fiends ; the lords of death
 And fire, and judgment ; lords of time and war ;
 Beauty, and strength, and light ; and the long roll
 Of creatural powers and passions Deified.
 Mere emanations these of mortal mind,
 Preserved as shadows thus to realize
 Before all devotees their nothingness ;
 Who gave their names to stars which still roam round
 The skies, all worshipless, even from climes
 Where their own altars once topped every hill.

Zeus. O God supreme, sole, all the gods to Thee
 Restore their stolen titles. Thou alone
 Hast true right to the names of Deity.
 First Cause, and impereceptible, unseen ;
 If apprehended, only by pure soul ;
 Source of all life, transcendent and eterne ;
 Source of all measure, motion, time, and change ;

Who makest, movest, rulest all ; Thyself
Impassible, immoveable, unmade ;
The one great Spirit of the Universe.
Who the world made of Heaven and earth, as man
Of mind and body. Father of all Life,
Whose living spirit animates the whole ;
Governs and guides to ends both blessed and wise ;
Gave mind its active power ; to nature gives
Eternal pregnancy, perpetual birth ;
And reasonable order, aye renewed ;
The light of Heaven, the Parent of the world.
Who art eternally, and causest things
To be which heretofore have never been ;
The Sovereign Will, the Intellect, the soul,
The perfect good, the perfect fair, the All ;
One, immaterial, who by one sole act
Dost all things comprehend ; and bliss supreme
Enjoyest, by knowing perfectly Thyself.
Among the worlds how many are Thy names !
For as the Sun in divers tongues hath names
As many, yet to all men is but one,
So Thou, however named, art God the sole.
Creator and adorer of the Heavens ;
Ruler most high of gods, and Sire of man ;
First, best and greatest of all Beings, last ;
Kind Conqueror of all foes ; of all create
The infinite reason, the substantive cause ;
The forces of all life impersonate.
Thou knowest and foreknowest all at once ;
Thou givest good and evil to all souls.
Thine arm sweeps over sea and land ; Thine eye
Pierceth all elements, to the Hadean shades,
Where Thou art throned, too, as in upper skies ;
Thy throne coequal with the universe.
The proud thou dost rebuke with death ; with life
Immortal dost reward the just and true.
All who have served or loved Thee Thou dost love,
And worship givest of all men in the Heavens.
With souls beneficent, innocent, and pure
Thou dost the largest and the loveliest stars
For aye consociate. All belongs to Thee,
And those who love Thee ; Heaven and all its worlds.

Apollo. And Thou Eternal Son, who dost unite
Creator and Created; God of light,
And light of God; of human and immortal
Soul, sole physician; Victor Thou of Sin,
That hell-born Serpent, Thee, we gods adore.

Dionysus. And Thou hast said, who art the Sovereign
Truth,
The Word, the Wisdom; Thou who neither canst
Deceive, nor be deceived; the gods are nought;
And earth and death and Heaven their triple crown
Should offer at the altar of Thy knee.
Hear, all-sustaining Spirit, who makest glad
All worlds with Thy fair presence, and dost change
Or chasten, at Thy will, the elements;
Thy travel only hath true triumph; Thine,
Whose pure communion sanctifies all souls,
Earth's table in its boundless round contains.
The wine of thy libation hath the heart
Cheered of both God and man for evermore.
Thy mysteries are pure wisdom known to all.

Osiris. Lord of the threefold region, life and death
And everlasting Being; King of gods;
Builder and benefactor of all worlds;
Who cast earth's rock foundation, and with hills
Walled it about, and moated with the sea;
Thou, sitting in the shining house of life,
Movest with Thy foot the everlasting wheel
Of Nature, and man's members mouldest divine;
Breathest in them their soul and takest back;
Life-issuing as the sun imparteth light;
Glad re-awakener of the soul in Heaven.
Eternal, all-beneficent, Lord of truth;
King of obedient natures; for Thy will,
Perforce or favour, all create obey.
Distributor of destinies; Lord beloved
Of spirits in the land of joy divine,
The land of purity, and light, and peace.
So should earth be, oracular truth once said,
And thus it is. Lord of stability,
For Heavenly things alone endure for aye.
Eternal vivifier of all Heavens!
Before Thy face the impure cannot stand.

The crowned slave mocks Thee ; and like hills of sand,
 Crumbling beneath the ruin of Thy tread,
 Earth's mountains tremble, and her high places fall.
 Thy name is higher than the highest Heaven ;
 Thy glory firmer than the firmament.
 Ruler of spirits ; of Heaven's superior spheres ;
 The earthy, and the nether world of hell ;
 Beginningless and endless, the one cause,
 Great, unimpersonable ; whose attributes
 Are beings, and whose thoughts creation ; Thou,
 From whose mouth wordlike the round world is born.
 Sovran of souls and re-establisher,
 Who plantest the Divine life in man's mind ;
 Who weighest man's actions in his heart, ere yet
 They bud in speech, or fruit in deed of hand.
 The birth and breath of prophecy ; of time
 Maker ; of all, Eternal head and end.
 The Lord of Hades, dwelling in the tomb ;
 Death henceforth clean and sanetified to man ;
 Who with just sceptre rulest righteous souls.
 Joy of the just on earth, the blessed in Heaven ;
 Treating all evil with Thy sacred scourge ;
 Lord of the visible and invisible life ;
 Being of beings ; Causer of causes ; God.
Aurmazd. Illimitable essence, unconceived ;
 One Spirit infinite ; from all Thy works
 Dissimilar, great dispenser of all good ;
 Best of all best, and wisest of all wise ;
 Father of justice and of equity ;
 Perfeet, who knowest all things from Thyself.
 The Lord of Nature ; not to be bribed by gifts
 Nor meeked by false prayers. Teacher sole of truth
 To those high souls whose wisdom is their joy,
 Their everlasting strength, their inner Heaven ;
 Coheritors and spirit peers of power
 These, who by intuition half-divine
 Of the interior light, the light conceive ;
 And, knowing God, all knowledge know of Him.
 Ruler of earth and guardian, king of Heaven ;
 Who made this world, that Heaven ; gave life to all ;
 And from the radiant fingers of His sun
 Streams indiscriminate blessings upon men ;

Children of earth and death, but planned to live
In an immortal future, pure from ill ;
Earth's mountain evils smoothed off ; the whole orb
Crystalline made ; themselves all shadowless.
He, with unerring prescience, perfect power,
Unchanging kindness acts, and wisest love ;
Who is the life of Heaven ; the threefold one ;
Uniting Deity and Humanity,
Self-circled in the Eternity divine ;
Drives Evil's monster dæmon from the earth,
From human souls sin's shadow, and o'er all
Life sheds resplendent purity and bliss.

Allah. No God but God is. He is His own prophet.
God, self-sufficient, Lord of the great throne,
Higher than Heaven, and wider than the earth ;
Vaster and more profound than the abyss ;
Whose is the kingdom of the universe.
Who comprehendeth all things ; made the sun
Star earth with flowers, and with his golden sword
Reap, like a labourer in the fields of light,
One everlasting harvest round the world ;
He made the moon succedent ; He ordained
Darkness and light ; He causeth life and death.
The Heavens and earth stand firm at Thy command.
And all that is between them and beneath.
High, gracious, mighty, worthy of all praise
Art Thou in this life, Lord ! and life to come.
Bounteous and wise, Thou lovest the merciful ;
The holy, the forgiver Thou of sin,
The acceptor of repentance ; faithful, just ;
Giver of peace, victorious ; excellent
Are all Thy names, Thy ways ; Eternal Power !
Thou knowest all things hidden and divulged.
Beside Thee there is no God, Thou art one.
Although within the world, the world without ;
Who was ere time or space was ; and now is
And will be though they both should cease for aye.
Nigher to every being than its life,
Too mighty still to live in aught create ;
Too holy to conform to things of time ;
Too perfect in all excellence to change ;
All angels He hath made, all Heavens, all orbs ;

Maintains and metes their natures, motives, ends,
Accordant with His mighty will : foreknows
All knowable things, and comprehends all known.
He knows the number of the drops of dew,
Spring's every leaflet, autumn's every seed,
And sums the quivered shafts of every sun.
The movement of all thought within man's brain ;
The stir of every feeling in his heart ;
The rise of every longing in his soul ;
Sin's sooty trail and virtue's radiant track,
Traced in the inmost spirit, shews unto Him
Clear as the course of comets in the sky.
He knoweth His own secrets, and conceals
From the united gaze of all create,
His infinite aim, His purpose absolute.
Neither to be resisted nor reversed
Is His decree, delayed nor dallied with ;
For at the fated moment all's fulfilled.
Without all quality, pure essence, He
Ears hath not, but hears all things ; eyes hath not,
But all things sees ; nor distance is, nor dark
To His divine cognition. To His touch
All inmost substances are palpable ;
The hearts of all things patent to His glance.
Wise in His ways and just in His decrees,
Nothing hath being but by Him produced ;
And though permitted evil, to Him sole
Pertains the right of knowing why it is,
For God must not be questioned. He alone
Hath all right, privilege, and prerogative.
The world exists but by His sufferance.
All things belong to Him ; and into all,
Brought out of mere privation into light,
He entereth as Possessor, Maker, Lord.
Not from necessity aught created He ;
Nor that to Him were need of lower life ;
Nor shadow of vantage from the universe ;
But from His lovingkindness, grace, and will
He breathed a vital blessing over space,
Quickened the void infinitude with light,
And filled the Heavens with angels, earth with men.
Who love Him, worship Him, obey Him, He

From His beneficent nature well rewards ;
 Not from their merit ; nor tie absolute
 Existent 'twixt well-doing and reward,
 For merit man hath none, but all is grace ;
 Nor can God under obligation lie
 To aught created, principle, or power.

Man all receives from, nothing gives to God,
 But that he hath received ; the gift to praise,
 The grace to thank ; the glory to adore.

Zeus. We therefore in the names of gods and men
 Him worship ; to Him witness as the truth.

Archangel. False gods have had ere now true wor-
 shippers,

Who honoured names they wrongly deified ;
 The true God false adorers, who Him shamed
 If aught could, they deceitful knee'd, in base
 And bloody service, so misdeemed ; or whose
 Nature more horrible than their own they judged.
 But now man's universal heart made pure
 By penitence and penance, every fine
 Paid to the utmost mite, all worship proves
 The faith that's most humane is most divine,
 Dearest to God and worthiest His approval.
 Imperfect apprehension He not blames
 Of things above man's intellectual grasp,
 For thought less answerable than for act.
 Of conduct most He judgeth, good or bad.
 Who lives not equal to his highest sense
 Of truth and good ; whose acts, judged by himself
 Wrong, conscience damns ; doth, so far, wilful sin ;
 His nature knowingly degrades ; and God,
 Thereby offended, justly dooms such soul
 To punishment proportionate ; but then,
 All fine must be commensurate with offence,
 Or finite causes infinite, and outweighs ;
 Law earthly more divine than Heavenly, proves,
 And man more just, more merciful than God ;
 Which is not nor can be, as thou mayest yet
 Know ere we quit this inward world of shades.

Festus. Oblivion's own ; like unrecorded dreams,
 Ænigmas uninterpretable, these,
 The worshipped perish ; the adorers live.

Zeus. Before the Christian cross and Moslem mosque
My marble fanes have fallen, and my shrines
Shrunk like a withered hand, ages ago.
But now all signs and sacred domes for gods
To dwell in are extinct. The world is all
One Temple of the Truth.

Brahm. The ages feigned,
That made Time groan to think how old he was,
And Deities in millions, are no more.
Ageless eternity, and God the sole,
The royalty of Heaven, is at hand.
Maker, Destroyer, Saviour! By all sense
Incomprehensible; all things above
True Being, Cause of all; how, what, unknown.
One universal mind pervading all;
Dwelling in ocean, penetrating earth,
Touching the Heaven, enclosing all the stars;
Inhabiting the universe, and through it
Passing like wind. All souls, or gods or men,
Shall fail in Thee, as air, a phial holds,
Rejoineth infinite space, the crystal cell
Once broken which confined it. Yea, as streams
To ocean flowing, cease therein, all name
Losing, all form, so freed from life's sad yoke,
Created spirit once emanant from God,
Shall recombine with Deity, and enjoy
In Heaven's original bliss its primal power.

Budh. All things that are shall nothing be at last
Save what's resolvable in Deity;
Yea, the whole world of old before Thy face
Fading, stormlike beneath the sun, shall pass,
Absorbed in godhood as some islet cloud
Melts midmost in the slowly darkening day.

Festus. Great be the misconceptions even of gods.

Budh. Giver, receiver, master of all life;
The primal, final, universal soul;
Pure Deity absorbed in ultimate rest;
Who knowest the number of all souls, all stars;
Lord of the everduring dome of Heaven,
The region of perfection, home of bliss,
Who dwelleth alone in the unseen, too pure
For death-doomed eye; the Lord who contemplates

With eyes of love the myriad-nationed world ;
 Lord of all Being, ruling from on high,
 Heaven, earth, and man, the sacred trine of life !
 Great sea of spirit, fountain of all forms,
 Issuer of all the laws of life which rule
 Both unintelligent orbs and mightiest minds
 In the well-ordered world, transcript divine
 Of thought eternal in Thy boundless breast ;
 Let us to Thee give all our titles, Thine
 Of right, Thine only. Let us, gods of earth,
 Thee worship, God of Heaven, as shadows sun.
 Thee self-existent, universal Lord,
 Unchangeable, and independent ; all
 Embracing ; by Thee planted all the worlds
 Expand like flowers on life's eternal stem ;
 Impenetrable, pure ; judge of all spheres ;
 Author and worker of all laws which rule,
 Material, mental, moral,—all the worlds ;
 Father and founder of all souls, all stars,
 Creator, blessing, hallower of all life ;
 Whose will necessity, whose word is fate ;
 Whose providence inexorable law ;
 Who to the infinite nature Thou hast made,
 Givest lavish maintenance ; while in Thyself
 Wealth inexhaustible still overabounds ;
 Treasures of mercies unconceived. Who, yet,
 To premonition of the humblest soul
 Inspired by Thee to ask what Thou hast willed,
 Attentive, grant'st Thy saints their least request,
 Were it an orb of light. All holy, hear ;
 We praise Thee, we adore Thee, God of gods !

Festus. And all the lesser shades, which move like
 moons,

Half darkened by the greater—half illumed—
 Are priests and prophets of the mightier ones ?

Archangel. They are ;—and further round than eye
 can mark,

The myriads of adorers of each god,
 Confused and prostrate, as their souls awake
 To the objects insubstantial of their prayers.
 Behold ! they kneel to those they hailed on earth
 As makers—as omnipotent—etern—

And cry for help, for comfort ; none have they
 To give to others or themselves ; these high
 Divinities, which, like shadowy pyramids,
 Shew form of strength, but of reality nought.
 Gods of a mightier kind and nobler strain,
 These truly—yea, but half false ; and though now
 Doomed, as the partial copies, so, untrue
 Of the one universal, worthier yet
 Man's trustful prayers and lands, than those thou seest
 Far off, round yon horizon of Death's hall,
 Monstrous, uncouth, fear-gendered, barbarous ;
 Such as were Rimac, who by Lima once
 Sat, aboriginal oracle, imaged huge ;
 Till, smote by Christian mace, the immarbled lie
 Rejoined chaotic formlessnesses ; strewn
 In grim and grinning fragments round its base :—
 Or where in Kirauëa's lava-land
 And island hills ablaze, fierce Pelé, thought
 Goddess of fire, mid burning billows basked,
 And music of the clashing hills of flame ;
 Or trode, triumphant, the tempestuous glow ;
 Such too the gory gods of western climes,
 Who yearly claimed their feast of blood. The false,
 The base, the brutish Deities give way,
 And all their sacred follies in their train,
 Before the earthquake truth, engulfing all.
 Wee to the false gods, wee ! to prophet, priest,
 And worshipper, all wee !

Festus. Hark ! round the earth
 Each soul hath found a tongue and uttereth woe.
 Lo ! from their thrones the man-made gods descend,
 And rend their robes and trample on their crowns,
 And hurl away their sceptres. Woe to all
 The gods and idols of the heart of man !
 Their sun is set for ever in the night
 Which was ere Light was. Surely it is more
 To be true man or woman than false god,
 And falsèr prophet. God alone, the true,
 The God of Heaven, shall be witnessed to
 And worshipped.

Archangel. Witnessed, worshipped, too,
 By all : the faithful and the faithless—saint

And sinner. See, like clouds, the gods disperse,
Into their preoriginal nothingness.
And now the woe of those misguided, blind
To the demoniac madness of their creeds,
Shall be transformed to joy ; they who adore
Their dreamlike Deities, merely incompetent,
Shall, by God's grace, essential cause of all
Prior to all self-manifestive power,
Wisdom, or word, or act, reason, or will,
Their errors see transfigured into truth.
Listen, ye souls of men ; all worship cease
Of what is false and fleeting ; to your minds
Self-believed, always free, but bounded aye,
Fitted, or more or less ; but now to Truth
Transferred your lost allegiance shall receive
Just warrant of its right, perpetual peace,
Conscience of truth, bliss indestructible.
One only true God can be, has been, is.
False gods there never have been, nor false suns ;
Save the abnormal shadows which betimes
Leap into life around him, and to man's
Weak sense owe all existence. So of these,
Parheliacal gods which mocked men's minds,
And, lighting them to darkness, left them there.
False gods there never have been ; but of God
False names, false notions numberless. Behold
In these the transient types of one eternal ;
Each several aspect Deified, of Truth ;
The obeliskal One, the Primal Three ;
The powers Divine and cardinal of Heaven.
Yet prayer, preferred with a pure heart, to Baal,
As neither heard nor answered could it be
By non-existent Dæmon, might, by Him,
Who sits enthroned in unthought purity,
The Lord and Lover of the world, be ta'en,
And righteously fulfilled ; so angels deem.
But in the depths of man's own nature, see,
As in a lake, reflected, hills, skies, clouds,
His Heaven, his hell, and all his creature gods,
Inverted, and distorted, and obscured :
All which must vanish ere the truth Divine
In glory supervene. Idolatry

Worshipped God meanly, as though knowable
 Through generative energies and powers;
 Not as man's great Regenerative Lord.
 For life was of the Angels, as was law :
 But love in place of law, in lieu of life
 The immortality of Heaven, Christ gave.
 Hence what, in false faiths, energies were deemed,
 Are never more than symbols in the true.
 God's omnipresence seems not sensuous;
 Unless He be in us we are not in Him.
 Signify all things; nothing represents.
 And therefore were the chosen race alone,
 To whom the godly secret was confined,
 Lapsing from faith, rebuked and charged with sin.
 The general world, unconscious pietists
 Of falsest creeds and errors, God allowed
 To live on, unreprieved, till came the time
 When all the mysteries of Heaven and earth
 Were put in evolution; are but now
 Fulfilling.

Festus. Lo! the nations of the dead,
 Which do outnumber all earth's races, rise;
 And high in sumless myriads over head
 Sweep past us in a cloud, as it were the skirts
 Of the Eternal passing.

A Voice. Souls, arise
 To deathless life!

Archangel. It is God speaks. Let us hence.
 The general judgment is in hand,—God's hand.
 The souls of those whom God loves circle us.
 For thee, thy lot thou knowest. As a seed
 Buried in earth doth multiply itself
 Full fifty fold, so will thy nature when
 Changed, it lifts head in the air divine of Heaven.

Festus. Out of the depths of earth and the world's
 womb
 Thine unborn angels seek thee, God, all love!
 Now is Thine hour for which all hours were made,
 All life created, all things else ordained;
 Be it the hour of merey, Lord! to all,
 For Thy Son's sake, who, for the sake of man,
 Came down from Heaven into the pit of earth,

And lived as one of us and died ;—He died
 The death of all at once of every age ;
 The world's accumulated weight of woe,
 From its first life unto its last, which none
 But the Omnipotent could bear—He bore ;
 And all for us. God became man that man
 Might become God. Oh, favour infinite !
 Now reap the righteous, righteous but in Him
 Any, their guerdon. Evil to repay
 With good was Christ's command, and earth with Heaven
 Is thus the great example of His word.
 Enough for sinners this, for all which live.
 Do Thou, Lord ! be with us. In Thee we live ;
 Our treasure, trust, and triumph is in Thee.
 Behold the day of our salvation come
 Unto the countless all Thou hast redeemed !
 The ages sweep around me with their wings
 Like angered eagles cheated of their prey.
 Reach forth your arms, ye angels ! wreath anew
 Your starry crowns. Earth was betrothed to Heaven
 Upon her natal day. I hear them come ;
 I hear the armed torrent of their wings
 Hitherward streaming. Lo ! the glowing Heavens
 Are rushing to receive us. Oh, rejoice
 All ye that are immortal ; and whate'er
 Hath been predestined to eternal end ;
 The day, determined ere all time was, dawns.

SCENE—*Earth.*

ANGELS and SAINTS—AN ANGEL *descending* ; FESTUS.

Saint. Whence art thou ?

Angel. I ? from Heaven, and thither tend ;—
 One moment here to bid ye to prepare.
 Our Lord the Eternal Son comes hither, girt
 With His victorious hosts, to judge the world.

Saint. What victory hath our Almighty gained ?

Angel. One final, over death and hell. Shout, earth !
 Thy freedom is accomplished, and thy foes
 Brought down to endless ruin.

Saint.

Angel, speak!

We burn to learn the tidings of this war,
Whereof thou tellest and doubtless wast a part

Angel. Hot from the fight I come. This lightning
blade

Hath holpen well to thin the infernal rout,
Which back hath fled to hell, howling like winds.
But let me, at your will, ye peaceful saints,
Relate what happened to us, from first to last.
The time was come in Heaven when God the Son,
Bowing His head before the Omnipotent,
Who doubled every blessing infinite
Wherewith He had enriched His Only One
From first, rose from His glorious throne, and stepped
Into His sun-bright ear, calling aloud
His angels to attend Him while He went
To judge the earth, as foreordained of old ;
That Heaven and earth might view the majesty
And merey of the God of all. We came,
Selectest spirits, countless ; crowded bright
As the great stream of stars which flows through Heaven,
Fast by the foot of God, each wave a world ;
Eager to eye this act of glory long
Talked of in Heaven, and now to be achieved.
Forth from the starry towers, and world-wide walls,
Of Heaven, we set in high and silent joy,
And journeyed half our way through Heaven, when lo !
A sight which checked the foremost flaming ranks,
That halted frontwise, working doubt at first,
But triumph after. Shielded and drawn up close,
Behind a broken and decaying world,
From which the light had vanished like the light
Out of a death-shrunk eye, sat Lucifer—
Midst in the powers of darkness, and the hosts
Of hell, enthroned sublime ; and all were still
As ambushed silence round the foe of God.
But oh ! how changed from him we knew in Heaven,
Whose brightness nothing made might match nor mar :
Who rose and it was morn ; who stretched his wing,
And stepped from star to star : so changed he shewed
Most like a shadowy meteor, thorough which
The stars dim glint—woe-wasted, pined with pain.

And by his side there sate or shrank a shape
We angels knew not, but the Son of God
Knew him, and called him Death; whom when he saw,
Arousing, after, out of sleep intense,
That unrealmed tyrant drew his mortal dart,
And drave it through himself,—a shade, shade-quelled.
Then to that chief of mischief and his fiends,
Who, thick as burning stones that from the throat
Of some volcano foul the benighted sky,
Shot up triumphant into air, as they
Beheld our ranks move on, thus spake our Lord,—
Not wrathfully, but sternly pitying:
Hell's wretched remnant! wherefore crouch ye here?
Is it to sue destruction, or to bar
My passage? If it be, in both ye err.
And will ye trust yourselves again to war
With me Almighty? Have I not overcome
Ye separately both? Speak, brutal Death?
Fit follower and fellow to all woes,—
Wherefore this instantaneous haste from hell,
And both from Hadean bondage, thus again
So soon to compass mightiest wickedness,
And tempt extremest wrath? Speak, head of hell!
To Him thus Lucifer: Almighty Son!
Prince of the face of God, first-born of Heaven,
Head of all angels, world-creative Lord.
Thy power I defy not; but in peace
I war with fate. My life is to destroy.
Evil hath more activity, if good
More strength: and one must wear the other out.
The more august the sin, so much the more
Is my necessity. Yon earth hath been
The battle plain of Heaven and hell. From Thee,
Who knowest all things, it were vain to hide
My purpose, which for a thousand years, the years
Of bondage, hath grown in me and lived on,
Toad-like within a rock—vital where all
Beside was death—to seize the nascent souls
Of men as they rerose from death to life,
And sweep them off in midst of all these hosts
Assembled for that cause here as Thou seest,
To hell;—the universal race of man.

But if ordained that not on them, but Thee
And Thine, old hate shall satisfy itself,
Approach no nearer : for we live by death ;—
Or turn the tide of fate, Thou sole who canst !
Ceasing thereat, his host upraised a shout
Which shook the stars, and made them ring again.
Our Lord to him then spake thus, mild as Spring
Addressing earth, when smiling she lets fall
All flowerets from her lips,—It is well God rules.
Lo ! to what base extremes infernal pride
Can push a princely spirit once in Heaven.
Thee we will not destroy now, for thine hour
Hath yet to come—when least thou thinkest it.
God's wrath thou hast endured in punishment,
Not yet His power. Away ! I warn ye hence,
Ere wrath ride forth again. To Him the Fiend
Answered : God rules not us the unordered damned,
Nor recks of hell. For ages past belief,
Unless by those who like ourselves denied
Thine own eternity—by creature mind,
However lofty, hardly compassed—we
Our pain have borne without remorse, or sign
Of pity from our Maker. Shall we now
Believe, whilst thus confronting Him again,
He means us better ? Never worse than now.
Therefore I say to ye, On ! mightiest fiends,
On ! Let us reap companions for our woes,
Or earn annihilation ! At the word
His fiery phalanx rushed to bar the way
Of Him whose ways are over all His works.
A million spears blazed forth their answer bright,
As of as many tongues. Serene our ranks
Stood as the stars o'er thunder. God the Son
Sate in His orbéd car, and breathed on them ;
And they were rolled up like the desert sands
Before the burning wind,—throne wrecked on throne,
All ruined and foredone. Pursue ! He cried,
Nor let them near the earth I go to judge.
And we pursued, as many as He chose,
And chased from sphere to sphere that wretched wreck
Of falsest fiends :—and I, it seems, am first
Of all my victor brethren to declare

The triumph passed and coming, and to cheer
Your hearts with tidings of our Lord, to whom
Be glory for His universal deeds,
And to Him, only God!

Saint. Behold where comes
Another warrior-angel from on high ;
Like angels, always singly or in hosts.

Angel. It is the most dread Azrael, unto whom
The sword of Death is given as a boon.

Saint. What say'st thou, Heavenly one?

Azrael. To the extreme bound
Of light's domain we chased the flying foe,
Who on the confines of the lower air
Once rallied at their leader's stern command,
Whom more they fear, or seem to fear, than God.
They halted, formed, and faced us. I and mine
As on we came in order, full career,
Exalted by success, hoped ardently
One more convincing contest : but in spite
Of future woe or the tempestuous threats
Of the great Fiend who marshalled them, each eyed
His neighbour pale ; their trembling shook all air ;
And each one lift his arm, but no one struck.
Awhile in dead throe-like suspense they stood,
Or like the irresolution of the sea
At turn of tide—then wheeled and fled amain,
And in one mass immense broke down from Heaven,
Cliff-like ;—there let them lie ! such fate have fiends.
And we returned, hoping to meet, as charge
To all was given, the Lord our glory here.

Archangel. Let all the dead rejoice ! their Saviour
comes.

SCENE—*The Judgment of Earth.*

THE SON OF GOD, THE ARCHANGEL, SAINTS, and ANGELS.

Archangel. Let all the dead rejoice ! their Saviour
comes

With clouds of angels circled like a sun,
Belted with light, and brighter than all light.
Lo ! He descends and seats Him on His throne,

Alighting like a new-made sun in Heaven.
 The world awaits Thee, Lord! Rise, souls of men,
 Buried beneath all ages from the first;
 Ye numbered and unnumbered, loathed and loved,
 Awake to judgment! Rise! the grave no more
 Hath power upon ye than the ravening sea
 Upon the stars of Heaven. Ye elements!
 Give back your stolen dead. He claimeth them
 Whose they both were and are, and aye shall be.

Son of God. I come to repay sin with holiness,
 And death with immortality; man's soul
 With God's Spirit; all evil with all good.
 All men have sinned: and as for all I died,
 All men are saved. Oh! not a single soul
 Less than the countless all can satisfy
 The infinite triumph which to me belongs,
 Who infinitely suffered. Ye elect!
 And all ye angels, with God's love informed,
 Who reign with me o'er earth and Heaven, assume
 Your seats of judgment. Judge ye all in love,
 The love which God the Father hath to you—
 For His Son's sake, and all shall be forgiven.

Saints. Lord! let us render back to Thee the love
 Which is Thine own: none else is worthy Thee.
 Who shall commemorate all Thy chosen names,
 Thou who art Sire at once and Son of man?
 Servant, friend, brother, bridegroom, husband, Lord,
 Priest, advocate, physician, teacher, guide,
 King, conqueror, and master, world-adored!
 Owner of all things here and almoner!
 Thou the Divine Protagonist of time,
 The everlasting sacrifice; the world's
 Eternal victim, Thou, and victor God!
 On high the light of all perfections, here
 The blessed shadow; Sun of righteousness,
 And star of wisdom lonely in the Heavens!
 The cloud of glory in life's wilderness,
 The splendour in the temple; Temple, rock,
 City of refuge! Branch and root, and vine!
 Tree, too, of Life, of knowledge! Almond tree
 First flowering from the wintry world of death!—
 Thou too the olive, whence distils the oil

Of inspiration for the elect anoint!—
 Robe, sceptre, crown, and shield! Eye, arm and head!
 Earth's corner stone and architect of Heaven!
 Fire, fountain, river! Sacrifice for sin,
 And sin itself! The serpent of the saved,
 The angel of redemption, and our God!—
 Curse transessentiate into blessing! Man,
 Angel and deity! The all in all,
 The one sole Being of the universe!
 The Lord of armies, and the Prince of peace,
 Whose humblest follower is a prince with God!—
 Our fellow-heir and our inheritance,
 Witness and Judge, and ransom and reward,
 Originator, mediator, Fine;
 For thou art all of these, and Thou alone!

Son of God. Behold this day I dwell with ye on earth,
 Even to the last; the next shall be in Heaven,
 Where ye shall meet the Father, and remain
 In the eternal presence, He through me
 Blessing all spirits overflowingly.

Saints. Dear Lord, our God and Saviour! for Thy gifts
 The world were poor in thanks, though every soul
 Should nought but breathe them; every blade of grass,
 Yea, every atomic of earth and air
 Should utter thanks like dew. Thy ways are plain
 Only in Thine own light. And this great day
 Unveils all nature's laws and miracles—
 All to Thee all as one. Thy death was life;
 Thy judgment is all mercy, Lord of Love!
 The world's incomprehensible no more
 To man, but all is bright as new-born star.

Son of God. The Book of Life is opened. Heaven
 begins.

SCENE—*The Heaven of Heavens.*

THE RECORDING ANGEL, LUCIFER, FESTUS, ANGELS.

The Recording Angel. All men are judged save one.

Son of God. He too is saved.

Immortal! I have saved thy soul to Heaven.

Come hither. All hearts bare themselves to me,

As clouds unbind their bosom to the sun.
 And thine was wealthy in the gifts of good.
 And, if its guilt and glory lay in love,
 Let light outweigh the darkness! Thou art saved.

Saints. Rejoice! rejoice!

Festus. Could I, Lord! pour my soul out,
 In thanks, even as a river rolling ever,
 It would be too scant for what I owe to Thee.

Son of God. Nay; immortality is long enough,
 As life, or as a moment is, to shew
 Thy love of good, thy thanks to me and God.
 One heart-throb sometimes earneth Heaven—one tear.

Festus. My Maker! let me thank Thee, I have lived,
 And live a deathless witness of Thy grace.
 And Thee, the Holy One, who hast chosen me,
 From old eternity, while yet I lay
 Hid, like a thought in God, unuttered—Thou,
 Who makest finite full with the Infinite,
 As is a womb with an immortal spirit,
 Oh! let me thank Thee that I witness to Thee.
 And Thou mid-God! my Saviour, and my Judge!
 Sun of the soul, whose day is now all noon—
 Who makest of the universe one Heaven—
 I praise Thee. Heaven doth praise Thee. God doth
 praise Thee.

The Holy Ghost doth praise Thee. Praise Thyself!

Lucifer. Is he not mine?

God. Evil! away for aye!
 In the beginning, ere I bade things be—
 Or ever I begat the worlds on space,
 I knew of him, and saved him in my Son,
 Who now hath judged; for fraught with God-hood, He
 Yet feels the frailties of the things He has made;
 And therefore can, like-feelingly, judge them.
 For I abide not sin; and in my Son
 There is no sin—not that He takes away.
 It is destroyed for ever and made nothing.

Son of God. Spirit, depart! this mortal loved me.
 With all his doubts, he never doubted God:
 But from doubt gathered truth, like snow from clouds,
 The most, and whitest, from the darkest. Go!

Lucifer. I leave thee, Festus. Here thou wilt be happy.

To be in Heaven is to love for ever
 God—and thou must love here. Here thou wilt find
 All that thou canst and oughtst to love : for souls,
 Re-made of God, and moulded over again
 Into His sun-like emblems, multiply
 His might and love : the saved are suns, not earths ;
 And with original glory shine of God ;
 While I shall keep on deepening in my darkness,
 With not one gleam across the gloom of being.

Festus. Let us part, spirit ! It may be, in the coming,
 That as we sometime were all worth God's making,
 We may be worth forgiving ; taking back
 Into His bosom, pure again—and then,
 All shall be one with Him, who is one in all.

Lucifer. It may be, then, that I shall die. Farewell.
 Forgive me that I tempted thee !

Festus. I am glad.

God. Stay, spirit ! all created things unmade,
 It suits not the eternal laws of good
 That Evil be immortal. In all space
 Is joy and glory, and the gladdened stars,
 Exultant in the sacrifice of sin,
 And of all human matter in themselves,
 Leap forth as though to welcome earth to Heaven—
 Leap forth and die. All nature disappears.
 Shadows are passed away. Through all is light.
 Man is as high above temptation now,—
 And where by grace he always shall remain,
 As ever sun o'er sea ; and sin is burned
 In hell to ashes with the dust of death.
 The worlds themselves are but as dreams within
 Their souls who lived in them, and thou art null,
 And thy vocation useless, gone with them.
 Therefore shall Heaven rejoice in thee again,
 And the lost tribes of angels, who with thee
 Wedded themselves to woe, and all who dwell
 Around the dizzy centres of all worlds,
 Again be blessed with the blessedest.
 Lo ! ye are all restored, rebought, rebrought
 To Heaven by Him who cast ye forth, your God.
 Your ransom, also boundless, hath been paid :
 The pure humanity of God the Son

Can let nought suffer ever—nay, not those
 Who most have wronged Him, and the souls He loves.
 Once for His murderers He forgiveness asked;
 And what He would, I will. The well of grace,
 The fount of love He fills from, is too deep
 For mere creation to exhaust; draw He,
 Draw ye, eternally. Your primal fall,
 All nature's, is one everlasting lapse,
 A bottomless descent, till stayed by grace;
 Which grace is mine. The issuant universe
 Returns but to its source, as dewdrops seek,
 Exhaled by sun, cloud-massed, their parent sea.
 God's gifts are aye of increase. For this cause
 Receive ye tenfold of all gifts and powers.
 And thou who camest to Heaven to claim one soul,
 Remain possessed by all. The sons of bliss
 Shall welcome thee again, and all thy hosts,
 Whereof thou first in glory as in woe—
 In brightness as in darkness erst—shalt shine.
 Take, Lucifer, thy place. This day art thou
 Redeemed to archangelic state. Bright child
 Of morning, once again thou shinest fair
 O'er all the starry armaments of light.

Lucifer. The highest and the humblest I of all
 The beings Thou hast made, Eternal Lord!

Angel. Behold, they come, the legions of the lost,
 Transformed already by the bare behest
 Of God our maker to the purest form
 Of seraph brightness.

God. These have but fulfilled
 The faults of imperfection; nor without
 Evil can things create, of themselves act,
 Or interact. Not theirs perfection, worse
 And better rounds all life, all conduct rules.
 All elementary tendencies of life
 Aet downwards: one, destructive, sole aspires.
 Thus, through creation, all depart from God,
 Through death, return; through ill all good consumed.
 Be all forgiven.

The Restored Angels. But Thine be all the praise!
 And ours submissive thanks. When evil had done
 Its worst, then God most blessed us, and forgave.

Oh, He hath triumphed over all the world,
In mercy, over death, and earth, and hell!

God. For that my grace is greater than the world,
My essence vaster than the universe,
All recreated life, exalted now
To union with its Maker, all may see
Their Being's broad foundations in myself;
And know that though on all the fine I fixed
Of finitude; on all the soul's results,
Woes self-begotten, self-conceived deserts,
And misconstructions of the Infinite,
When come the end of all, which none but I
Know nor can know: it is mine—the whole made pure
By perfect pardon from all ill, to enfold
In mine own infinite Being; and in all
The life of love imbreathe, the life of God.
Evil to soul ere it means opposite
Of what to her seems good in outward shew,
In act or thought; thus death to all which live,
Corruption and decay. But in my sight,
Evil nor is, nor was. I made the world,
Called it by mine own name, and named it good;
The infinite whole as circumscribed in me.
The dealings of mind Infinite with man,
And all created spirit are, as is need,
In their divine perfection unconceived.
But now that Heaven is all, let all be known.
There is no such thing as evil, never was,
Nor ever shall be, in this my universe,
Apart from natural causes and the flow
Of necessary liberties. Free mind,
Free within certain bounds, imperfect, fails
In due conception, justly inadequate,
Of my divine intents to creatures known,
As fate, doom, destiny. So good—and good
May active now, now passive be, and ill,
And all their representative essences,
In spiritual life, material, mixed,
Wage, of necessity, wide and blessed war,—
For evil always is activity;
Which lasts while nature; purifies both hosts
By the spilled blood of passions, and vain life

Wasted on mutual death, though sacrificed
 On highest altars, to ends most glorious thought,
 Yet holy therefore, not. But here in Heaven,
 Good, losing nought, is made divine, and ill,
 Sloughing its selfish personalty, becomes
 Transfigured in ascent, the all redeemed,
 Commensurate with soul kind; and mind create,
 Distinct from, yet perfused with Deity,
 The end is peace and all embracing bliss.
 This done, this known, divisive nature ends.
 Truth only unitive marks the spirit's path,
 An endless radius from a boundless point
 Of pure perfection. All created mind,
 Whate'er its power, how far soe'er it fly,
 This parent point hath limit to its force;
 And, active thought its essence, must revolve
 Around some central spirit.

Angels.

God!

God.

Henceforth

All thought of the now hallowed world of life
 Tends to communion with the Infinite;
 Communion vital, virtual and divine,
 Wherein is bliss supreme.

Holy Ghost.

Eternal Son!

The tears of nature and the pangs of time
 Are passed; and wisdom glorified in all
 Love made; I, Wisdom, parent of all souls,
 Rejoice. Oh! ever blessed be thy throne;
 Thy throne the crown of Heaven; Thy crown Thy name;
 Thy name the everlasting Lord of life.
 Sole King and Conqueror of the spirit-world,
 Who by Thine infinite sacrifice didst conclude
 In ample verge the universe of life;
 Bliss-giver, Thou who art the bliss of all,
 Be thy soul satiate with this victory.

Son of God. All-hallowing Deity, all-parent power,
 Of God prime effluence, it is for Thee I fought
 Time's universal war; for Thee I gain
 This Heavenly victory; for Thee this peace
 Celestial, recreative.

Holy Ghost.

Lo! I have seen

The mountain of creation, all whose sands

Were star-worlds, called eternal by made mind,
Like to a night-born islet mid the main,
Sink in the abyss of Being as it rose.

Son of God. Now all in all are one; and Deified
All nature as in God.

Holy Ghost. God, all in all.

Son of God. All God hath made are saved. Heaven is
complete.

Angel of Earth. Be glad, O world of worlds! Rejoice,
all life,

And mourn no more. Death, evil, suffering, cease.

Ouriel. Lift up your starry voices, all ye spheres!

Let all creation, from its inmost heart,
Sound forth one song of ceaseless, boundless praise.

Festus. How joys the soul redeemed; joys, as when first,
On the horizon of God's awful eye,
Some world He hath willed into existence beams
And gladdens in His glance, whose look is love.

Lumiel. What infinite wonders we have witnessed here!
And now the greatest this, of all most blessed.

For, as in things material, force all rules,
In matters spiritual it is weakness wins;
As once of old thou sawest, prince of God,
On Padan's angel-visioned plain; so, once again,
It is God's humanity prevails o'er God.

Festus. Unsearchable are all God's works, God's ways.

Guardian Angel. Created mind can ne'er the twin
extremes

Combine of bliss and Being, sin and Heaven,
Save when in union all divine with God,
Impossibles prove reconciled; and man,
Though innocent, a sinner, sees his soul
Saved from perdition by God's love alone;
Sees Christ, all sinless, sin for him, become,
Though God of God, the veriest mock of men—
Yea, though eternal, dead.

Festus. All see I now;
And, Heaven within the spirit, the whole divine.

Guardian Angel. That sinners be made holy, sin itself
Made righteousness, and suffering vital bliss,
Though marvellous seeming to the finite mind,
Divergent whilst from God, astounds not soul

United with Divinity; for what
More contrary can shew than Heaven thus full
Of boundless Being glorified with bliss,
And the black void, whence all things, at His word,
Leapt into life, and starred the skies with light?
That flame should Heavenward rise, or waters fall,
Or ice evolve heat, mind no more confounds
Than that who fallible stood should sometime fail.
Why that who fell should rise? All evil but gives
Just scope for God's more grand benevolence,
Who forms all natures, and transforms at will:
Happy in making happy, O elect
Of Heaven and earth, and using to best ends
This life-world and its universal powers.
Thus with the godlike angels, too, at last
Atoning by obedience just to God,
Oh! doubly-blessed and trebly-worshipped name,
Of all in Heaven or earth, or under earth,—
Self-exiled penitent, from affairs mundane,
For selfish rule, inexpiable else;
For cruel, impious thought, or reckless deed;
Misconstrued love, and means of grace thrust back;
They their asbestine expurgation passed,
Exalted by progression infinite,
Through conduct, aspiration, and intent,
Thrice recreate, shall rise; and round God's throne,
Where, o'er the infinite and immaculate skies,
Yon rainbow bends its everlasting beams,—
Not drops of water, but translucent stars
Quick with eternal light, wherein the spirits
Of time all glorified abide, shall they
Bright guardians stand for aye; like dear to God
Both man and angel kind. And when in the end
Unnumbered times, duration unbethought,
Have passed, our God—His name be ever blessed
By saints, and hallowed—shall another world
Of nature cause akin to these bright Heavens,
He, reigning in all thought, desire, design,
Shall glorify Himself unboundedly;
The powers of all spirits shall aggrandise;
Make them wise, happy, humble, good, content;
Into their hands long tried, it maybe, He

All mortal destinies will entrust, and bid
Them rule and bless wherever stretch His skies.

Festus. So great His mercies are, so vast His love,
So infinite His wisdom, all things seem
Possible, be they only good and kind.
All kind affections ripening here in Heaven
A thousandfold beneath God's smile; and blessed
Of all, all blessing, perfect life attained,
Nature expands into Divinity.

Guardian Angel. Hither with me!

Festus. But where are those I love?
The dear religions of my heart, all true,
All perfect, all consoling while they ruled?

Guardian Angel. You happy troop!

Festus. Ah, blessed ones, come to me.
Loves of my heart on earth, and soul, in Heaven,
Are ye all here too with me?

Angels. All!

Festus. It is Heaven.

Before God's all felicitating love,
All earth love pales, how pure soe'er or dear;
And worship, sense of immanent Deity,
Labouring within the spirit to burst forth
Into supreme fulfilment of all truth,
Like to a luminous effluence from the heart,
Circles the soul as with a glory cloud.

Angels. All praise, all love, all worship, Lord! be
Thine.

Festus. Who can survey the world's vast ways and woes,
That he hath passed through, times extinct, to this,—
This dome of worship, past all orbs like earth,
The sun-born seed and increment of light,
Founded in strata, deep and dim of fire;
Beyond those skies, the camp of light, where gleams
The bannered sun, the oriflamme of God;
Past many a sun-star beaming out his life,
As with a glorious gratitude of light,
In empyrean loneliness, to God;
Beyond all opposites, beyond all results,
All rest, all mutability, all act,
And mighty sequences of light and night;
Far out beyond all systems, where mere form

Deformity becomes, the abode Divine ;
 Beyond the infinite bound which circumscribes
 Created reason, into this primal state,
 The bright and absolute centre of pure cause,
 Nor feel that worship unitive with Him,
 The great destroyer of all evil, God,
 The highest bliss of Being, Being knows ?
 Wherefore let us Him ceaselessly adore ;
 Praise Him, ye chosen of the earth and skies ;
 Ye visible raylets of the invisible Light,
 Blend with the universal Heavens your lays !
 Immortal leaflets of Love's holy flower,
 Breathe forth the perfume of eternal praise.

Angel. Come, let us join our souls into the song
 Of glory, which the saved all sing, to God.

The Saved. Father of goodness,
 Son of love,
 Spirit of comfort,
 Be with us !
 God who hast made us,
 God who hast saved,
 God who hast judged us,
 Thee we praise.
 Heaven our Spirits,
 Hallow our hearts ;
 Let us have God-light
 Endlessly,
 Ours is the wide world,
 Heaven on Heaven ;
 What have we done, Lord,
 Worthy this ?
 Oh ! we have loved thee ;
 That alone
 Maketh our glory,
 Duty, meed.
 Oh ! we have loved Thee !
 Love we will
 Ever, and every
 Soul of us.
 God of the saved,
 God of the tried,
 God of the lost ones,
 Be with all !
 Let us be near Thee
 Ever and aye ;
 Oh ! let us love Thee
 Infinite !

Festus. So, soul and song, begin and end in Heaven,
Your birthplace and your everlasting home.

Angels. In Heaven extolled are now all souls of earth,
And each particular essence at Thy word,
O God ! rejoins the pure and pious skies.
All government, rule, empire is at last
United here, the kingdom sole of Heaven,
Meant from the first for universal rule.
In boundless bliss all creatural power is now
Essentially and ever more absorbed.
Henceforth the holy offspring of the word
Of all sustaining grace, shall teach the souls,
Victors through God, eternal virtue's truth ;
Adding celestial might to every thought
Hallowed by Thee, by Thee all thought inspired.
The Gods are one God and all power is His.
High over all and deep in all dost Thou
Ever rule one thing by another ; still
On all Thy throne is based, and round all Thou
Stretchest the line unlimited of Heaven.
Divine and holy is Thine every work,
Eternal only as ordained by Thee,
Unknown but to Thyself, who dost remain
Steadfast in love though Heaven and earth rebel.
All sway is Thine, Lord ! Heaven and earth are one
In universal glory : world by world
Night renders up to Thee the fruit of light,
Sown in her bosom, reaped and ripened here ;
Unutterably happy to approach
Perfection in the Infinite, how far,
How high soever still to Thee allied.
All blessing God ; who with Thy boundless love
Dost Deify the Heavens and make the soul
Of man expand with immortality,
Now we with him in fourfold joy rejoice,
And all the Heavenly hierarchies of light,
Ineffable, adore Thy grace supreme.
All sanctifying Lord of love and might,
Let whole creation testify to Thee,
As vice to virtue, darkness to the light,
Hell thus to Heaven, and man to Deity !—
Glory to Thee our God, who all to prove,

Of earth the law, of Heaven the grace above,
Dost make the great I am, the all I love.

Holy Ghost. Time there hath been when only God was
all :

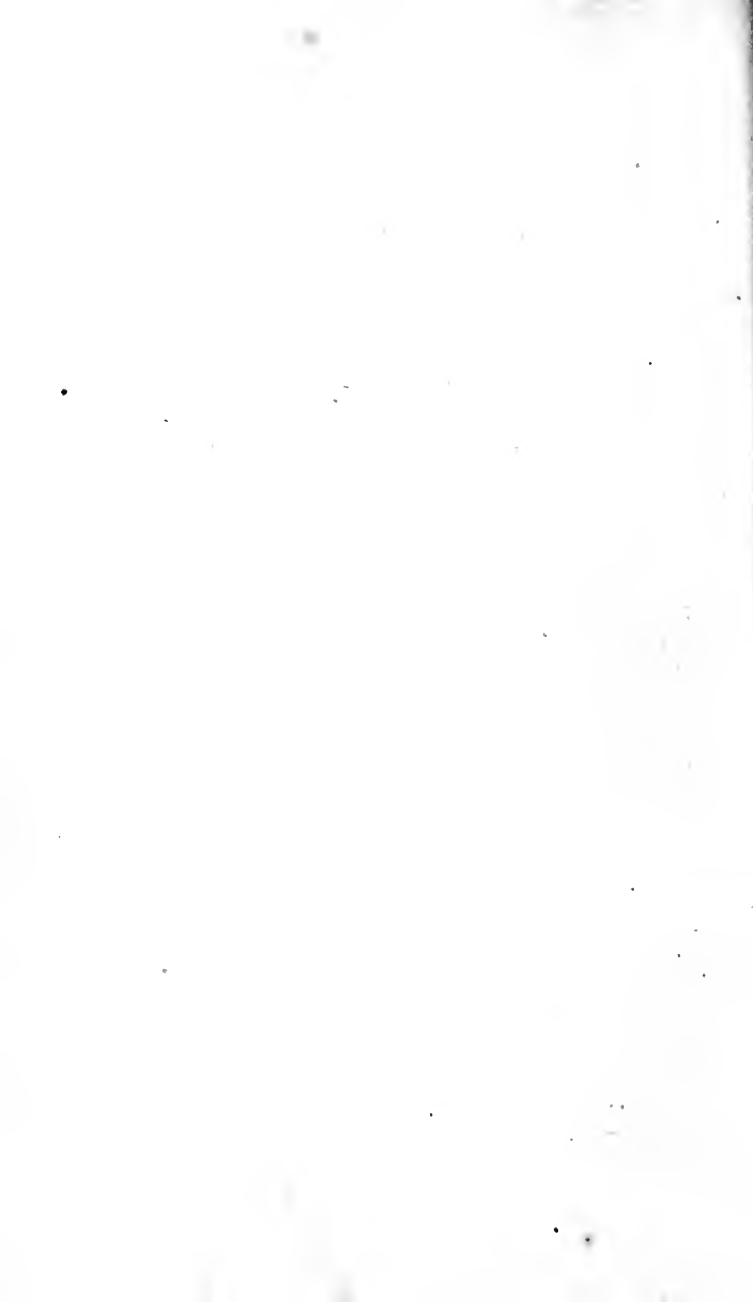
And it shall be again. The hour is named,
When seraph, cherub, angel, saint, man, fiend,
Made pure, and unbelievably uplift
Above their present state—drawn up to God,
Like dew into the air—shall be all Heaven ;
And all souls shall be in God, and shall be God,
And nothing but God, be.

Son of God. Let all be God's.

God. World without end, and I am God alone ;
The Aye, the Infinite, the Whole, the One.
I only was—nor matter else, nor mind,
The self-contained Perfection unconfined.
I only am—in might and mercy one ;
I live in all things and am closed in none.
I only shall be—when the worlds have done
My boundless Being will be but begun.

L'ENVOI.

READ this, world! He who writes is dead to thee,
But still lives in these leaves. He spake inspired :
Night and day, thought came unhelped, undesired,
Like blood to his heart. The course of study he
Went through was of the soul-rack. The degree
He took was high : it was wise wretchedness.
He suffered perfectly, and gained no less
A prize than, in his own torn heart, to see
A few bright seeds : he sowed them—hoped them truth.
The autumn of that seed is in these pages.
God was with him ; and bade old Time, to the youth,
Unclench his heart, and teach the book of ages.
Peace to thee, world!—farewell! May God the Power,
And God the Love—and God the Grace, be ours!



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ERRATA.

- Page 301, line 30; for "sun-cirling" read "sun-circling."
 Page 330; after "devout of men," a full stop is wanted.
 Page 339, last line; after "thought," a full stop instead of comma.
 Page 416, line 3 from bottom; for "all natural" read "all-natured."
 Page 423, line 14; after "after," dele comma.
 Page 424, line 9 from bottom; for "therefore's" read "therefore."
 Page 424, line 16; for "torrent" read "horrent."
 Page 428, line 2; for "in" read "on."

OPINIONS AND NOTICES.

A most remarkable poem, of great beauty and greater promise. My admiration of it is deep and sincere.—SIR E. BULWER LYTTON.

There is great exuberance of thought and imagery throughout this work, and a profuse expenditure of both, fearless of exhaustion of the author's stores. One feels as if one had "eaten of the insane root that takes the reason prisoner" in many passages; or of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, with strange elevations of spirit and stranger misgivings, alternately glowing and shivering through the bosom.—JAMES MONTGOMERY.

If Coleridge, Wordsworth, Göthe, and Shelley had not existed, we should esteem such writing as this a miracle. With nothing are we more impressed, on the whole, than with the sacred character of this poem. The poet of "Festus" transcending even Göthe in this particular, projects himself into the purely ideal, setting his will and his fancy free from all obstruction. In a word, he doth what he likes.—J. A. HERAUD.

It contains poetry enough to set up fifty poets.—EBENEZER ELLIOTT.

A truly wonderful poem.—DOUGLAS JERROLD.

I can scarcely trust myself to say how much I admire it, for fear of falling into extravagance.—ALFRED TENNYSON.

An author of much merit and genius.—W. M. THACKERAY.

I know no poem in any language that can be compared with it in copiousness and variety of imagery. The universe is as rife with symbols to this poet as it is with facts to the common observer. His illustrations, sometimes bold and towering as the mountains, are, at others, soft, subtle, and delicate as the mists that veil their summits. But better than this, with a truth, force, and simplicity seldom paralleled, we have here disclosed the very inmost life of a sincere and energetic mind. Metaphysical and psychological speculations are, so to speak, actualized and verified by the earnestness and passion of the writer. There are few books in which what is so profound in its essence is rendered so familiar in its exposition. There is an universe in its entirety. It abounds in thoughts so beautiful, and sentiments so exquisite in their simple truth, that we should not only excuse the occasional extravagancies, but they might almost be felt as a relief from what would otherwise be overpowering in its beauty.—J. WESTLAND MARSTON.

A mine of golden poesy.—THE REV. J. G. WOOD.

This is one of those books which we read with throbbing of the heart and with wonder, and with almost amazement at the far-reaching thoughts that fill it. "Festus" is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of modern poems.—S. SMILES.

Opinions and Notices.

We have here a rare feast of magnificent thoughts clothed in wondrous language. In what has been termed the "philosophy" of Hamlet, we discover nothing that is not fully equalled, and with like originality and power, in "Festus," while the lavish prodigality with which the author pours out the finest poetical garniture from beginning to end of his work, seems to picture to us as though a whole cornucopiæ of wit, wisdom, and beautiful sentiment were emptied before our eyes at once. Might such a simile be allowed, I should say honestly that this book is in a modern library what the Garden of Eden was in the old world,—a glory and perfection in the midst of comparative sterility.—CHARLES HOOTON.

As times go, and as poets write, the author is remarkable for the plenitude of his faith, and the piety of his verse.—PROFESSOR AYTON.

The vein of richest poetry runs full and free through the whole volume. We are astonished at the continuous and ever-flowing wealth of thought and depth of tender feeling. The language of the female characters in "Festus" is always beautiful. There is great beauty in the purity and deep devotion of them all. Thoughts and feelings, all poetical, are scattered right and left with measureless prodigality. The sheet-anchor of assurance in the long-suffering and the sublime love of the Universal Father, which is cast out into the troubled sea of human passion, and the holy beauty of purified affection, which is thrown, like a rainbow, over the gloomy vessel of humanity in this poem, is the salvation of it. . . . The orthodoxy of Festus is, in truth, the true orthodoxy of the gospel, that which is built on love, and resting in triumphant confidence that the Creator is the Regenerator and Perfector of all His creatures. We look on "Festus" as doing that which "Faust" failed to do, and correcting the grand fault of that great poem by lifting the spirit of the reader into a superior philosophy, the philosophy of faith and progression.—WILLIAM HOWITT.

Job contains a solution of the grand problem of the reconciliation of individual man to God, and to the difficulties of the universe, through a divine medium. "Faust" is a fragmentary attempt to settle the same question apart from supernatural aid; "Manfred" howls back to both that such reconciliation is impossible, and that the riddle of the universe is absolutely illegible by man. Shelley's "Prometheus" is the argument of the "Faust" extended from man the individual to man the species; while "Festus" is the argument of Job applied in like manner to the whole human family; Festus is to the one as Job to the other, a type of the fall and recovery of all men. The scene of Faust and Prometheus is on earth; that of Job and of Festus is (essentially) in eternity.—REV. G. GILFILLAN.

In the character of Lucifer, the spirit of evil, as conceived by the author, there is nothing human. It is not a bold, bad man, like Marlowe's; nor a proud, defying one, like Milton's; nor a sneering, sarcastic one, like Göthe's. It is the impersonation of a principle. Lucifer and moral evil as it exists in the world, are with the author logical equivalents. Personality evil, and you have the devil. It is the destiny of this dark spirit to perform a ministry that militates

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against itself, a ministry that out of sin brings forth holiness; from doubt, faith; from death, immortality. Though ignorant of the final consummation of things, the genius of evil has a preternatural instinct that its work is all abortive. Though monarch of Hell he feels he is a vassal to a higher power, whose mandates he would disobey but cannot. This is pre-eminently a philosophical creation,—HEPWORTH DIXON.

We know of no book in our time so subordinated to nature. Do not consider it as a book, or as a work of art at all, but as a leaf out of the book of life. In boldness of conception and delicate touches of nature, wild passion, "Festus" is unsurpassed. It speaks from soul to soul, and claims the intervention of reflective intellect almost as little as one of those luxuriant growths of popular intellect, a Greek mythus. Again the work reminds us of the theory of the formation of the firmaments from nebulae. The page beams with thoughts; we say beams rather than sparkles, because the lights are so full and frequent. The character of Festus has two fine leadings, the delicate sense of beauty, and the steadfast fearless faith, which if it does not always direct, never forsakes him. We wish to say a few words upon the author's powerful conception of two actors upon the ethereal scene. The Son of God, as Redeemer, as Mediator, is more worthily conceived by this believing heart than by almost any before. Surely the mystery of the Trinity never was uttered in so sweet and pathetic a tone. The other powerful conception is that of the demon, the rebel in the heart, Lucifer. Man tells his aspiration in his God; but in his demon he shows his depth of experience, and casts light into the cavern through which he worked his course up to the cheerful day. Festus is not tempted through pride, but through coldness of purpose, instability of nature, an isolation of his particular being, hopes and views from the great stream of life. The rebel comes to him too calmly grand for deceit, like that of Milton's demon, or sarcastic impudence like that of Göthe's. There is no faintest tinge of worldliness in his verse, neither obstinate ignoring of the great Babel man has reared upon the harmless earth. He perceives vice and woe, as he perceives the whirlpool and volcano, sure that there is a reason for their existence, since they are permitted by the central power which cannot err.—*The Dial, U.S.*

The history of Festus is the one chosen medium for the poetical representation of Christianity and evil, and, consequently, the substance of the book is perfectly sound. There is no poem in any language which gives such a noble and striking idea of humanity under a Divine Grace which bears it victorious from and through evil, within and without. Our author's Lucifer is a new character to English poetry, being widely different from Milton's Satan and Byron's Lucifer. The foundations of his mind are deeper and broader than those in both the other impersonations, and there is a universality of knowledge along with a straightforward consistency of will possessed by him, which do not mark them. Milton's Satan is the devil of action, the tremendous hero who fought, and ever fights personally against God. Byron's Lucifer is the devil of a glozing oratory, with more words than arms; but Bailey's Lucifer

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is the dark philosopher who perceives the ideal of evil as a law in the universe, and works it out, and who could supply innumerable devils, both of the pugnacious and talkative classes, with all needful resources. His functions generalize throughout the economy of evil, as its minister under God; and his will, rushing impetuously over all his assigned range, becomes passive whenever it touches the will of God. There is no "kicking against the pricks" in personal irritation. The grandeur of Lucifer's stoicism, originating in comprehensive views of his divinely permitted mission under the deep consciousness that be he and do he what he will, he is ever the servant of God, prevents him from indulging in spiteful or offensive blasphemy; and no incongruity is felt when he stands in the temple of Heaven. We confidently declare there is no poem in existence which makes such glorious use of the physics and metaphysics of the universe as "*Festus*." It furnishes more profound views of man, the universe, providence, and God, than can be found in any other work of genius. In some respects it resembles Göthe's *Faust*, as in both works the human heart is exhibited under temptation, as insinuated by the companionship, teaching, and bribes of the arch fiend. But Göthe does not show the tempter's relation to Providence, and he sketches but a narrow scene in the universe, with its dark problem omitted. The author of "*Festus*," however, dramatizes man in his fundamental state, regarding good and evil, and places him in the circle of the universe, of the history of which he is the exponent.—THE REV. P. LANDRETH.

In richness of imagery and aptness of illustration we venture to affirm the author has no competitor in modern times. His learning is profound and various, and lies beneath many an expression carelessly thrown over it, and needing the raising of the hand to extract it fully.—*Dublin University Magazine*

Never have we read a poem or a drama which, by the pure vigour of the imagination, so holds the mind enchained from the very first by a continual and unbroken charm. Dramatic interest and artistic arrangement are forgotten while we are upborne upon this mighty heaving sea of imagination. Many of its prominent characteristics are those of the greater bards; the same spontaneous flow, the same lofty and inspired strength comes whole from the depths of nature.—*Universalist Quarterly, U.S.*

The charm of the volume is its faithful transcript of the moods which, cloudlike, pass in fantastic beauty over the stream of emotion. Take it as the history of youth, ardent, and therefore trustful and generous; passionate, and therefore a prey to temptation; sensitive, and therefore capable of suffering any remorse; and we may extract a meaning which the author has not directly indicated. The love of The Supreme for his creatures, and their education, even by trial and error, seem the ends most present to the mind of the author.—*The Athenæum*.

We take the aim of the poem to be the exhibition of a soul gifted, tried, buffeted, beguiled, stricken, purified, redeemed, pardoned, and triumphant.—*The Times*.



in the hands of the public -
 published before the speaker should have obtained itself -
 readers the danger of obtaining a false.
 Letter to the Collector B. of Trin - more strongly a witness
 - solemnly long-united -
 Multitude of observations - pointed with various instances
 and well-thought managing - not made
 In the order of the day of the speaker -
 of the speaker. In the order of the speaker -
 even more confused -
 Speakers under the speaker for speakers - rather
 not be given to the speaker, but to others off
 the speaker of the speaker -
 8. ~~repeatedly~~ ~~proposed~~
 9. ~~the argument in the speaker - proposed~~ ~~unpleasant~~
~~non-relevant on the speaker and relevant the~~
~~speaker.~~ 240 ~~more~~
 9. ~~long description~~ ~~failed~~ 235 ~~more~~
 13 & 14 ~~Problems~~ 68 ~~more~~
 15 ~~unpleasant~~ ~~Devil~~
 13 & 26 ~~wood speaker~~ - ~~reable~~ ~~speaker~~
 185. ~~long~~ ~~more~~
 104 ~~a~~ ~~proposed~~ ~~speaker~~ - ~~the~~ ~~relevance~~
~~the~~ ~~speaker.~~
 194 ~~unpleasant~~ ~~speaker~~ - ~~failed~~ ~~lot~~ ~~more~~
 223 ~~a~~ ~~a~~ ~~point~~ ~~dealt~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~speaker~~ ~~more~~ ~~to~~
 465 ~~unpleasant~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~unpleasant~~

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